



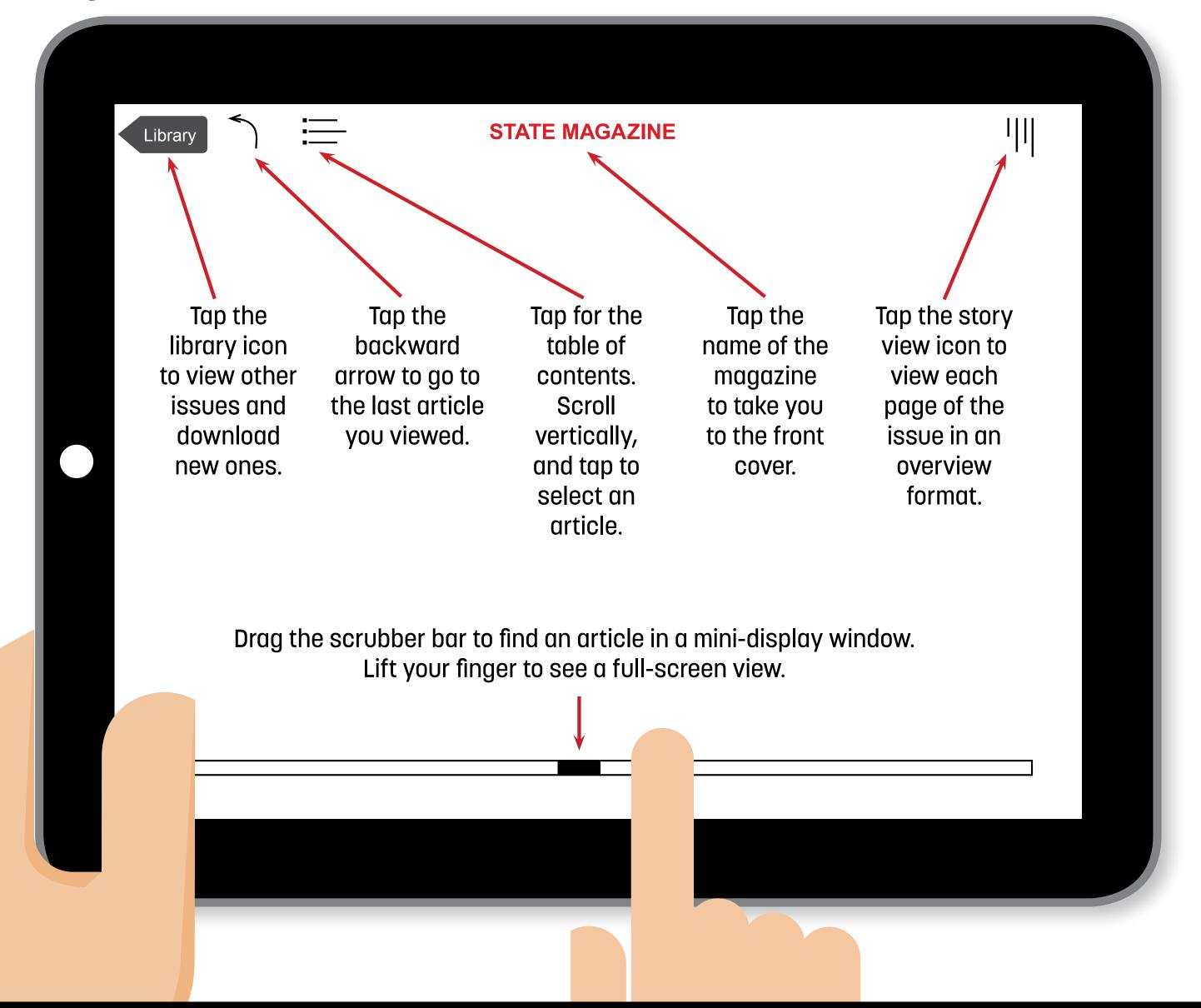


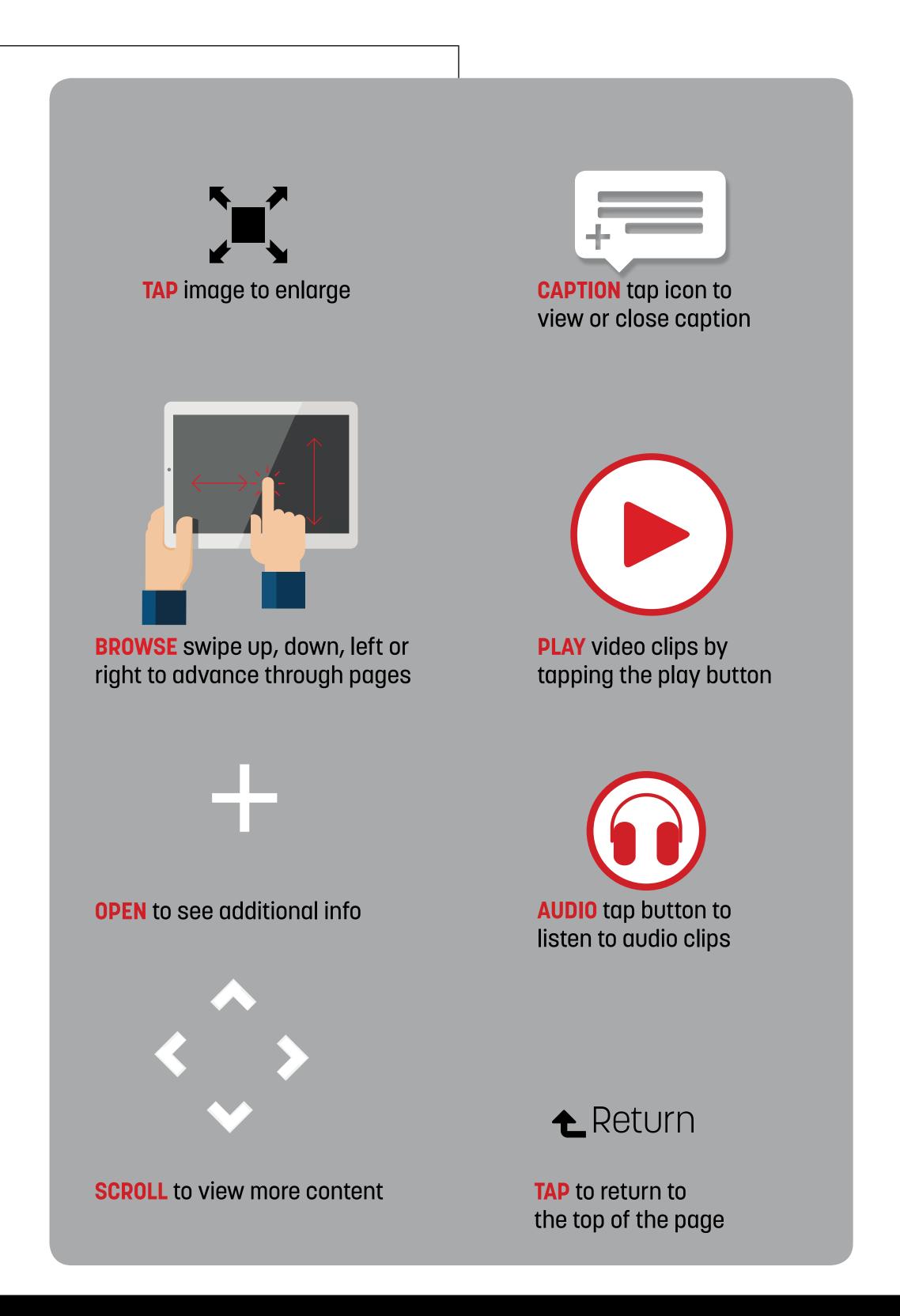
Navigating through State Magazine: How to use this issue

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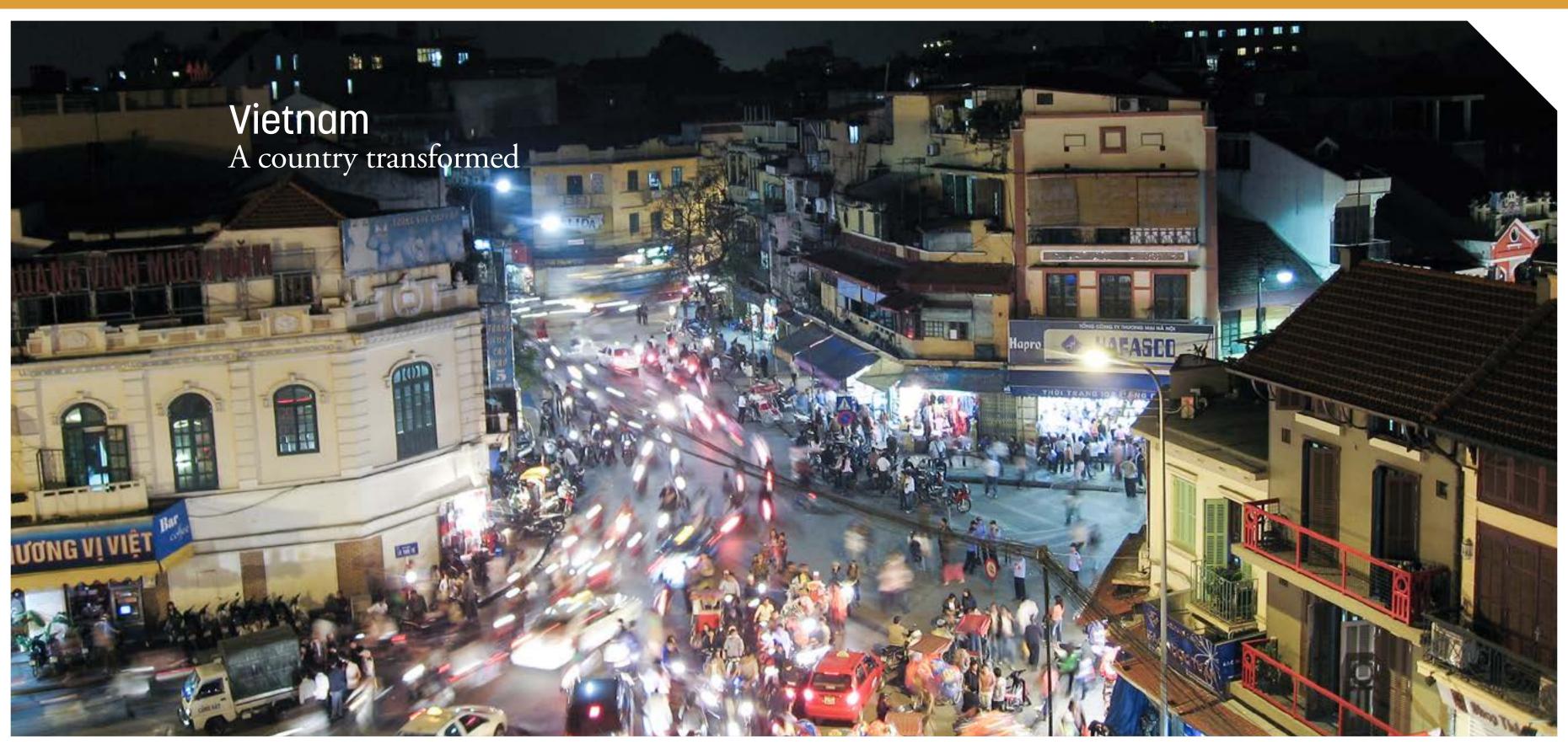


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Submissions

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Unsolicited artwork and manuscripts are not accepted, and publisher assumes no responsibilty for return or safety of unsolicited artwork, photographs, or manuscripts.

Query letters may be addressed to the deputy editor or statemagazine@state.gov



Members of the exercise evaluation and control team consult with federal, state and local exercise participants. Shown from left are Virginia Department of Health representative Denise Sockwell, Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent Aiden Garcia, Bureau of Diplomatic Security Logistics Analyst Dustin Temple, an official not being identified, Bureau of Administration Industrial Hygienist Jeffrey McClaflin and Christopher Williams.

Photo by Joan Kato

State Annex Does HazMat Exercise

In August, the Department of State Diplomatic Mail and Pouch Facility, at the SA-32 annex in Sterling, Va., conducted its first full-scale Hazardous Material exercise, working with SA-32's Facility Response Team. The two-day exercise involved a simulated biological hazard covertly delivered and then detected in the facility.

The exercise focused on the facility's ability to protect its personnel, manage an incident response and recover from an all-hazards incident. It also assessed the ability of the Department to coordinate internally using an Incident Management Team and with external community partners to provide the annex emergency resources. The Incident Management Team coordinates the responses of Department bureaus and works with local, state and federal government to ensure a rapid and effective response to an incident affecting the Department's domestic facilities.

The Department's local community partners offered valuable assistance, too. The Loudoun County Fire Department and Hazardous Material Team provided personnel decontamination support, and the Loudoun County and Virginia Departments of Public Health provided assistance and medical consultative services to staff. Other agencies assisting included the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Washington Field Office of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Team, the National Capital Region American Red Cross and the Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services of Richmond.

Annex employees, the Incident Management Team, and participants from the state of Virginia and Loudoun County identified many strengths in their procedures. The exercise also identified areas of improvement, and gaps in processes and procedures, many of which have since been resolved.

□



During user-acceptance testing in June, Elsa Ma, a CGFS project manager, answers a question from Vania Huggins, a budget analyst and WebRABIT user with the Bureau of Public Affairs.

Photo by John Nottestad

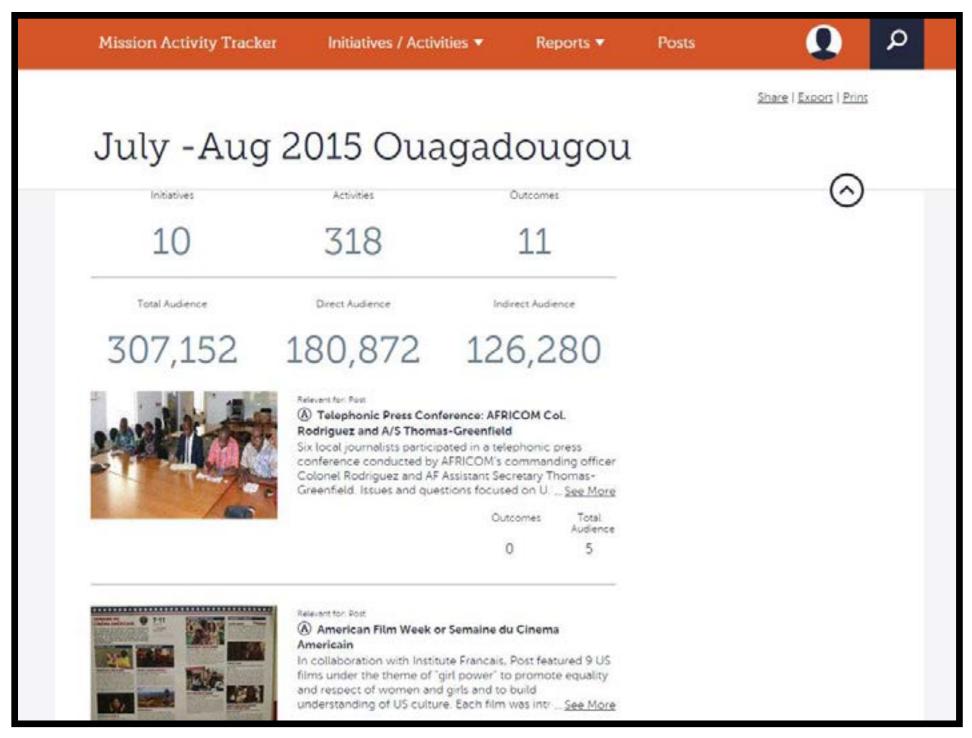
New Tool Aids Budgeting

This summer, a new financial budgeting tool called Budget by Location (BBL) was released by the Bureau of Budget and Planning (BP) and the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services (CGFS). The tool adds functions to the Web Resource Allocation and Budget Integration Tool (WebRABIT) budgeting system. Posts will be able to use BBL beginning in November when they monitor the execution of fiscal 2016 budgets and plan fiscal 2017 resource requests.

WebRABIT is a computer application that allows posts, missions and bureaus to enter, import, modify and save budget plans at the post- and mission-specific level. These financial plans are rolled up to create an overall annual budget for Department Diplomatic and Consular Programs (D&CP) and Public Diplomacy (PD). WebRABIT software is also used by missions to forecast financial needs for future years, such as initial planning in a mission resource request.

More than a software module within WebRABIT, BBL is a substantive modification in how WebRABIT's financial plans are built. Missions can now allot and track personnel and costs down to the detail of each location; previously, all locations and corresponding budgets were lumped together under the main embassy or mission. It can also roll up the by-location resource data into one financial plan for the mission.

The research, design and implementation of BBL took years. In the process, a group of 18 WebRABIT system users came together in Washington for a week in June to help test the change in operation. Participants included users from overseas posts plus representatives of the CGFS Help Desk and other bureaus. Testers had varying levels of experience, which was crucial to assessing the ease of introducing BBL when it becomes active worldwide, and they were able to suggest enhancements. \square



This computer screenshot shows a PDMAT report for one post, Ouagadougou.

PD Toolkit Gets Upgrade

The online database by which the Department makes employees aware of its public diplomacy (PD) activities, the Mission Activity Tracker (MAT), has been revised, using suggestions from users and stakeholders. The new MAT, available later this year, will be more intuitive and have "auto-fill" and "type-ahead" functions that limit the number of steps required to enter the data.

It will also link PD activities to the goals of each mission and offer new navigable and searchable features to make entering and retrieving information on PD efforts more precise, better tailored to user needs and more attuned to the range of available programs. It also has a neater screen interface, more options from pull-down menus and flexible review mechanisms.

MAT is one of several newly designed systems being developed by the Policy, Planning and Resources (R/PPR) staff in the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs to support strategic planning, resource allocation and PD reporting.

R/PPR Strategic Advisor Donna Woolf said MAT has always been focused on showing how posts abroad daily meet "their public diplomacy goals and being able to record, retrieve and report on it in a simple and effective way." In MAT, reports on posts' PD activities tell what they do, whom they do it with, whom they reach and what is accomplished. A dozen posts have been pilot-testing the new MAT since late July.

MAT and the Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan (PDIP) use a shared PD database. The new PDIP, released in October 2014, was the first cloud-based secure Web application in R/PPR's Strategic Tools Suite. "By linking the two tools to the same database, we're creating a searchable system that will reduce duplicative reporting requirements and help PD officers employ accurate data to illustrate the impact of their work—which is vital in this era of data-driven policymaking," said Patricia Kabra, R/PPR director of policy and planning.



Ambassador Kounalakis answers a question during her presentation at the Ralph Bunche Library. Photo by Ed Warner

Former Ambassador Recalls Joys, Challenges

In a new book, former Ambassador Eleni Kounalakis discusses life inside a U.S. embassy. A new world opened up to her when, as a Northern California real estate developer, she was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Hungary. Kounalakis led the U.S. Embassy in Budapest from 2010 to 2013, during a time when Hungary experienced a period of dramatic political change, including a comprehensive restructuring of its democratic institutions.

On her return to the United States two years ago, she became concerned she would forget her experiences and decided to write a book about them. Kounalakis explores broadly how one becomes an ambassador, how one's life and family are affected, and how her background as a first-generation Greek-American shaped her insights.

In September, Kounalakis spoke at the Ralph Bunche Library as part of her outreach in her new work as a "virtual fellow" in the Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). She talked about her book, "Madam Ambassador: Three Years of Diplomacy, Dinner Parties and Democracy in Budapest," and about her time serving in Hungary. She said that of all the qualities a politically appointed U.S. ambassador should have, the most important is to be an experienced manager. It is important, she said, to be able to cultivate and harness the capability of the talented Department of State staff. She added that Embassy Budapest officers were so competent and so well-sourced that the mission "became the most reliable resource for what was happening in the country."



President Obama greets S/INI staff at a Sept. 17 reception for staff involved in the Iran nuclear agreement negotiations. From left are Assistant Coordinator Yael "YJ" Fischer, Assistant Coordinator Richard Johnson and Special Assistant Dan Milich.

Photo by Lawrence Jackson

Iran Pact's Compliance Office Formed

On Sept. 17, Secretary of State John Kerry appointed Ambassador Steve Mull as lead coordinator of the Iran Nuclear Implementation Office (S/INI). The office will coordinate U.S. interagency efforts in implementing U.S. obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), preventing Iran's development of a nuclear weapons program by, among other things, eliminating almost all of Iran's enriched uranium stockpile and dismantling its ability to produce plutonium that could be used in a bomb. In exchange for Iran's compliance, the United States and other members of the international community will remove sanctions on Iran's nuclear program.

Mull will chair the Iran Nuclear Coordinating Committee, a group composed of agency coordinators from more than six cabinet departments and agencies, which will assess progress on implementation and resolve associated policy issues. Jarrett Blanc, deputy coordinator, will coordinate internal Department tasks associated with the agreement. Assistant Coordinator Richard Johnson will be responsible for coordinating actions related to Iran's nuclear compliance and will work with U.S. government nuclear experts, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international organizations.

Assistant Coordinator Yael "YJ" Fischer will manage diplomatic engagement efforts in support of the JCPOA through regular contacts with negotiating partners on implementation and other key international partners. Assistant Coordinator Mark Appleton will ensure real-time information sharing throughout the interagency community on implementation issues and manage briefing and reporting engagement with Congress. Special Assistant Dan Milich will manage the office's workload and Office Manager Dawn Watzlavick will provide administrative support. Within the Department, S/INI will work closely with the Office of the Coordinator for Sanctions Policy on the lifting of relevant U.S. sanctions once Iran implements the agreement's requirements.



Cutting the ribbon to open the new facility are, from left, Ambassador Ken Hackett, Monsignor Antoine Camilleri, OBO Director Lydia Muniz and Under Secretary Patrick M. Kennedy.

Photo by Alessandro Corradini

Embassy Inaugurates New Chancery

The U.S. Embassy to the Holy See inaugurated its new embassy building Sept. 9 with a ceremony attended by Holy See and U.S. officials, media and other guests. The new facility was renovated to offer more space and state-of-the-art security features. The embassy has since moved into the building, which was originally the headquarters of INA, an Italian insurance and realestate holding company founded in 1912.

U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See Ken Hackett and Deputy Chief of Mission Victoria Alvarado greeted attendees at the ribbon-cutting and reception. Attendees included Vatican foreign minister-equivalent Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy, deputy foreign minister-equivalent Monsignor Antoine Camilleri, deputy chief of staff-equivalent Monsignor Peter Wells, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) Director Lydia Muniz and Bureau of European Affairs Executive Director Heather Townsend. Music was provided by the Vatican Gendarmerie band.

Ambassador Hackett told the gathering that the new area nearly doubles the size of the previous offices, offering "a more modern and functional workspace for our staff that can accommodate future growth." He emphasized that the move to the new embassy building signaled an upgrade in the U.S. bilateral relationship with the Holy See.

The site complies with the recommendations of the independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board and will also save approximately \$1.4 million in annual lease and operating expenses. Muniz said, "Renovation of a historic landmark filled with priceless artifacts is no easy feat." The facility will conserve resources and reduce operating costs, and is the first U.S. diplomatic facility to obtain Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification among OBO's existing buildings. \blacksquare

Direct from the D.G.

ARNOLD CHACON
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE



Diversity Matters-A Strategy for Success

Our nation has been, is now and will always be, a work in progress. We value our traditions and our past; and we always look forward—committed to do better for all our citizens. There's no doubt that over the past 50 years we've made great strides in promoting equal rights and equal opportunity for all. We have come to see diversity and inclusion both as a reflection of American values—and who we are as a country—and an engine for creativity and innovation. For more than 35 years, the Department has made a commitment to

recruit for diversity and merit. As has our country, we've made some unequivocal gains for instance, women now make up almost 40 percent of our Foreign Service workforce, almost 55 precent of our Civil Service employees and occupy nearly 37 percent of top leadership positions. We also know we can and must do better. Continued progress requires a smart strategy, resources, perseverance and resolve.

Strategy

Our strategy is to recruit talented, diverse candidates based on merit, wherever they may be. This is why we engage with colleges and universities across the nation. Through direct outreach by our Diplomats in Residence, targeted engagement and social media, we are building a pipeline of highly qualified, diverse candidates who are committed to public service and want to make a difference. I was recently in Miami and Denver and saw firsthand the breadth of talent and depth of interest in Department careers among underserved and economically disadvantaged communities.

Resources

Thomas Edison is often credited with saying that "strategy without implementation is hallucination." Without sufficient resources, our outreach and recruitment efforts will not fully prosper. Our Pickering and Rangel fellowships, and paid student internships, make it possible for us to support highly qualified and motivated students who might otherwise not have the opportunity to pursue a foreign affairs career. That is why continued support for these critical, merit-based programs is essential.

Retention

We are also fully committed to retention. We are redoubling our efforts to develop and retain top-notch talent. I recently spoke at the International Career Advancement Program in Aspen, a program aimed at mid-career foreign affairs professionals from historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged groups that provides mentoring and networking opportunities. These are the very employees we seek to cultivate for present and future leadership positions.

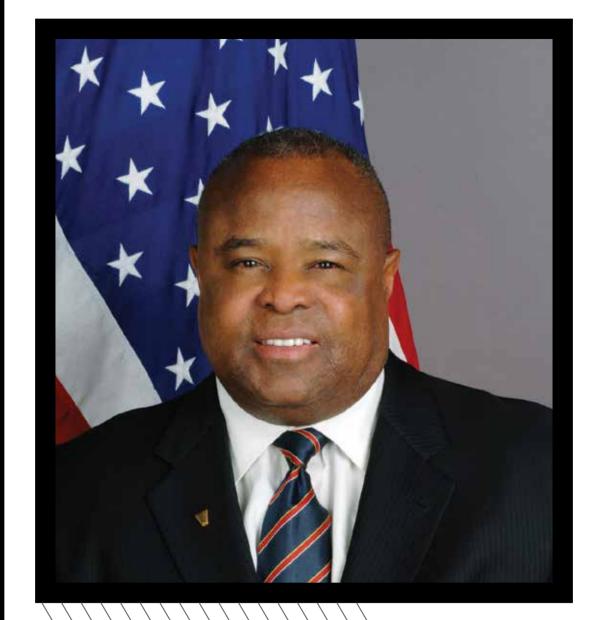
Resolve

The President and the Secretary of State have both challenged us and fully support our efforts to build a diverse, capable workforce that reflects our country's richness and variety and can address the foreign policy challenges of a complex world. As the Department's chief human capital officer, I will continue to work to ensure our hiring practices produce a workforce that reflects America's magnificent variety and to foster an inclusive workplace environment that can retain our talented employees. This is how the Department of State will build a diverse, talented and agile workforce equipped to take on the challenges and opportunities of 2025 and beyond. \square

Annel a. Chami

Diversity Notes

JOHN M. ROBINSON OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS



The New Face of Exclusion: Microaggressions

"So, where are you from? No, where are you really from?" This question was asked of an Asian-American, who was born and raised in the United States. It's just one example of the offensive questions that seem to subtly indicate unconscious biases. Sometimes when you hear such comments you ask yourself if you are being overly sensitive or whether you truly should be offended. But most times, you brush it off as lack of tact or ignorance and think nothing more of it.

There's actually a term to describe the insensitive questions and comments that leave you feeling a bit uneasy or slighted: "microaggressions." Psychologist and scholar Derald Wing Sue terms them "everyday verbal, nonverbal and environmental slights, snubs or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory or negative messages to target persons." You might already be familiar with the term, as microaggressions have recently become a popular topic of discussion in academia, but their implications in the workplace have been less widely discussed.

Although seemingly innocuous, microaggressions can be detrimental to employee morale and engagement. Microaggressions are much harder to spot than overt discrimination, and as pointed out above, they are often brushed off as lack of tact or an act of nonmalicious ignorance. Due to their subtle nature, microaggressions are often challenging to address, but they can strain working relationships. Left unaddressed, microaggressions can over time lead to workplace conflict and eventually affect operations. Additionally, severe or pervasive microaggressions based on protected Equal Employment Opportunity categories may rise to the level of harassment under certain circumstances.

Microaggressions aren't always based on personal animus. Even compliments, perhaps well-intentioned, can be offensive and may erode workplace morale, creating grounds for conflict. Examples include telling a Hispanic-American: "Wow, you are articulate and speak English so well!" Other examples include saying:

- "It's amazing what you people with disabilities can do. I couldn't live like you."
- "Oh, you're transgender? I can't even tell!"
- "I must say, you're really good at your job for a woman, especially considering you have children."

Now you're probably thinking you can no longer give compliments to colleagues, but that's not the moral of the story. It's important for us to heighten our awareness of the potentially harmful impact of our words and actions on others. While the compliments above might seem harmless, in reality they reinforce preconceived notions and perpetuate stereotypes. Our unconscious biases, if we remain unaware of them, can lead us to poor decisions or faulty conclusions. A University of Chicago study found that "people judged trivia statements such as 'ants don't sleep' as less true when spoken by a non-native than a native speaker" of English. But the same study showed that when people were made aware that an accent could trigger an unconscious bias, the credibility of the non-native speakers rose. Clearly, implicit biases influence our everyday social interactions.

In an increasingly diverse society, we must respect the backgrounds and experiences that enrich our workplace and heighten our awareness of the messages we sometimes unknowingly send through our words and actions. Let's challenge our assumptions, ask clarifying questions and be open to learn from one another. From time to time, for personal and professional growth, let's engage in reflection to become more self-aware and admit that as humans we all have biases, conscious and unconscious. It is important to reflect on why we say the things we say, or do the things we do. In doing so, we each do our part to counter microaggressions and contribute to an inclusive work environment. And by the way, in case you are wondering, ants do in fact sleep. \square

Jun M. Rohnessz





fghanistan has, over the past 14 years, become the supplier of more than 80 percent of the world's opium. With this staggeringly high rate of drug cultivation and production has come high drug abuse. A Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)-funded nationwide survey found 11 percent of the nation's population exposed to drugs, and 7

The survey, involving seven years of meticulous data collection and analysis, encompassed 2,757 households in 24 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Experts received more than 30,000 hair, urine and saliva samples from 2,711 men, 3,728 women and 4,110 children.

Nationally, more than 1 million Afghan children under the age of 14 tested positive for opioid use, more than 90 percent of them having absorbed drugs through second- or third-hand exposure to adult drug use or from drugs given for medicinal or behavior-control purposes. Many children had developed a tolerance to opiates—researchers found one girl with toxicity levels 10 times higher than those of hard-core heroin addicts in Western countries.

The survey found rural populations tested positive at a rate three times greater than in urban areas, and that rural households with at least one drug user were four times as prevalent as corresponding urban households. Most notably, two villages in Ghor province had at least one drug user in all households tested. The survey found rural children 20 times more likely to be exposed to drugs than their urban counterparts.

percent were users.



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A man displays a poppy seed pod used to produce opium in Afghanistan.

Photo by Zalmai, UNODC

A milky latex, which contains alkaloids for opiate production, drips from a scored poppy seed pod.



A member of the Uniformed Afghanistan National Police burns a pile of seized heroin.

SILENT TSUNAMI

Photo by U.S. Marine Corps

10

While there are no scientifically rigorous data on the drivers behind Afghan drug use, explanations include the lack of economic opportunity, limited access to licit painkilling medication and the sheer prevalence of opium in rural areas.

Top Afghan leaders have acknowledged the severity of the problem, with first lady Rula Ghani saying the nation risked losing a large number of its youth to drug addiction and Deputy Counternarcotics Minister Haroon Sherzad calling the pandemic a "silent tsunami." Leaders there have also characterized the challenge as worse than terrorism and asked religious leaders to speak out against drugs at Friday prayers.

To combat this scourge, Afghanistan and INL are taking action. On Sept. 26, Afghanistan released its national drug action plan (NDAP), saying it would conduct a national campaign to reduce Afghan poppy cultivation and drug trafficking, and increase drug treatment services.

INL, meanwhile, is helping Afghanistan make gains in drug treatment. The U.S.-Afghan partnership has helped Afghanistan go from having no evidence-based treatment programs in 2005 to 113 programs today, with the capacity to treat 39,200 users. During that time, INL has trained more than 600 clinical staff. An independent 2012 assessment found a 15 percent decline in drug use and crime rates in some areas, exceeding the U.S. National Drug Control Strategy's target.

Supported by an ongoing INL-funded training program, Afghanistan pioneered treatment protocols for women, adolescents and children, to the point where Afghanistan has begun to export treatment expertise. Treatment centers in eight countries are implementing modified protocols for treating childhood addiction that were developed for Afghanistan. Afghan treatment professionals also played a conspicuous, constructive role in the July launch of the INL-funded International Society of Substance Use Pervention and Treatment Professionals.

Because there's still a need for treatment centers in rural areas, a panel of scientists will develop new protocols for rural-based treatment that incorporates existing international experiences, such as the village-based treatment of alcohol addiction in rural India. The Afghan rural treatment model will also involve a mobile cadre of professional urban treatment personnel, local community leaders, volunteers and institutions. In all, it will be less costly, more sustainable, and better able to respond to women and children's needs.



A group of Afghan men gather for drug treatment at a Kandahar treatment facility. Photos by Brian Morales

Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul has encouraged Afghan government ministries to work to prevent drug use, since every dollar spent on prevention saves more than \$10 in such societal costs as crime, imprisonment and health care. The Ministry of Hajj and Islamic Affairs has incorporated drug use prevention in Friday sermons. The Ministry of Education will expand its school-based prevention program, now in 800 schools, and incorporate it permanently in its curricula. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has offered to tailor its vocational training and employment programs to include recovering drug users.

15 of 6 l



A group of girls stand in line at INL's children's treatment center in Herat.

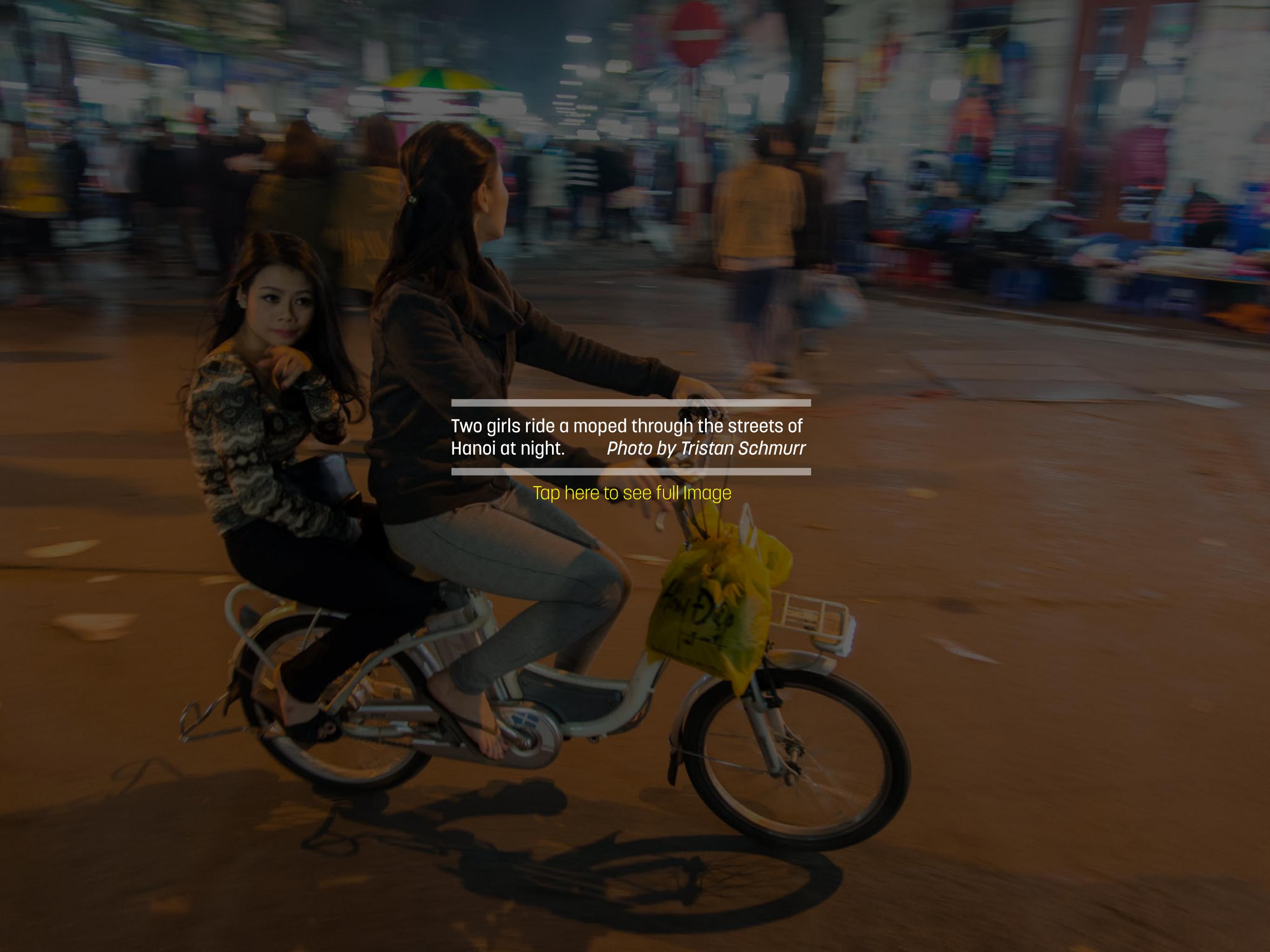
Photos by Brian Morales

Sustainability remains a key element in U.S.-Afghan cooperation. In January, INL and the Afghan government successfully initiated a plan to move funding of NGO treatment programs gradually to the Afghan government. Also that month, the Afghan Ministry of Public Health transferred more than 700 clinical staff working in INL-funded facilities to the government payroll. The ministry, which had already operated 21 centers, also accepted full responsibility for 13 INL-funded centers and committed to accept another 15 by Jan. 1, 2016.

Afghanistan has an enormous task ahead. As U.S. funding for drug treatment inevitably decreases, other international donors must step forward to maintain the current gains. The drug use problem has become too big to ignore and, if left unchecked, will undermine other efforts to promote good governance, economic development and public health. Nevertheless, Afghanistan's improving engagement on the issue represents a bright spot for international assistance efforts and a clear reason for hope.

□





By Andrew Shepard, environment, science, technology, and health (ESTH) officer at Embassy Hanoi and Marcia Outlaw, consular officer at Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC)

he first thing people notice when they land at Hanoi's Noi Bai International Airport is the expanse and orderliness of the rice fields that surround it. Slowly worked by men with water buffalos and women wearing *non la* (the traditional conical hats), the beautiful rice fields transition to limestone karsts in the misty distance, creating a calming and pastoral portrait of traditional life. In the 30 minutes it takes to drive into Hanoi proper, that scene changes dramatically to a hustling, bustling urban madness of smoke-chugging buses and a sea of motorbikes, both packed well beyond safe occupancy.

Such is the contradiction that is Vietnam, where the cities, societies and cultures are simultaneously ancient and modern, chaotic and purposeful. It is this mix that makes Mission Vietnam's two posts—Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), formerly Saigon—fascinating places to live and serve.

Vietnam prides itself on its unique culture.

Vietnamese can start their day with *ca phe sua da*(iced coffee with condensed milk), a sweet treat
loaded with caffeine, and for lunch head to the local
street food vendors for some *bun cha* (pork meatballs
with rice noodles) in *Hanoi* or *banh mi* (traditional

Storm clouds gather over a sheltered cove in Halong Bay.

Photo by Bryan Delew



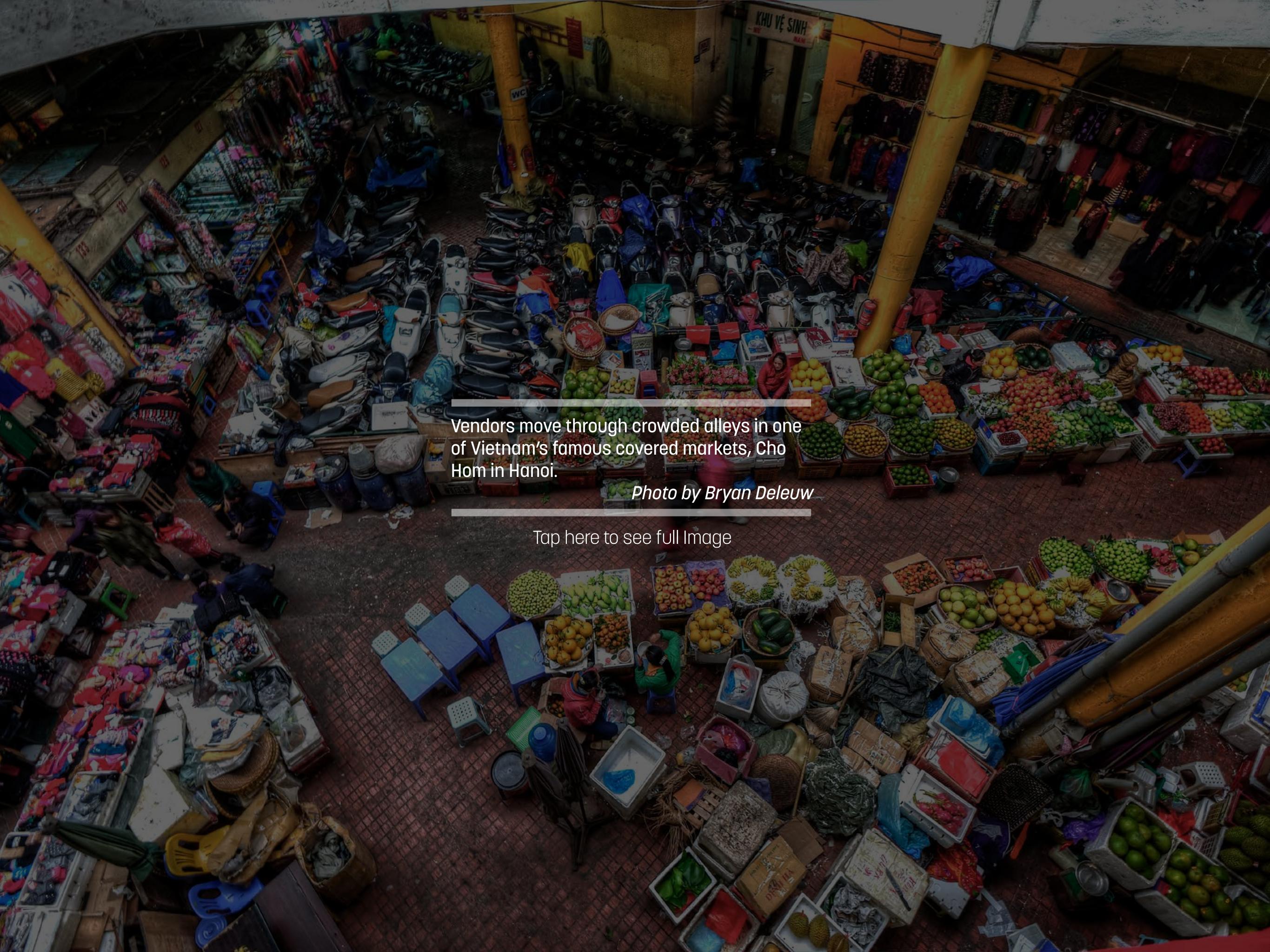
sandwich) in HCMC. On hot HCMC nights, the historic Caravelle hotel, whose rooftop bar was a meeting place for American troops and journalists during the Vietnam War, now hosts tourists and locals seeking stunning city views and cool drinks. Meanwhile, Hanoians might wander the Old Quarter to explore the 36 old tradecraft streets, peruse the night market or take in a water puppet performance. "There's nothing quite like meeting friends or colleagues in the Old Quarter," said Tom Eckert, Embassy Hanoi's regional security officer. "You sit at the street corner on tiny little plastic stools, and watch the chaos of the Hanoi streets unfold in front of you."

And those streets are certainly frenzied. Flanking small parks where middle-aged women practice synchronized dancing to loud music are the wild rivers of vehicles; to newly arrived officers and visiting Americans, no discernable traffic rules seem to apply. "The traffic here is downright bizarre... streets are packed to the gills with motorbikes and cars, people go the wrong way on one-way streets and it's not uncommon to see four individuals on one motorbike, while the driver is sending a text message on his phone," said Tomas Mandl, political analyst at the embassy. "And yet, for the most part, the system works."

Located at the geopolitical nexus of Southeast and East Asia, Vietnam has a long history of international influence. Chinese characters are inscribed on Buddhist temples throughout the northern half of the country, while the south has a history of Champa and Cambodian influence, with Angkor Wat-style ruins dotting the landscape. Vietnam is also a country that has seen dramatic and rapid changes since coming out of semi-isolation in 1986. This can be seen most plainly in its commercial sector. A walk through HCMC at any time of day or night reveals a multitude of shops that run the gamut from traditional Vietnamese arts and crafts to the familiar sights of Dunkin Donuts or Starbucks. Foreign brands are a symbol of the expanding economic cooperation with the U.S. The United States is now the single







Tran Quoc Pagoda, originally built in the sixth century, sits on Hanoi's West Lake and is visible from some embassy staff apartments.

Photo by Andrew Shepard

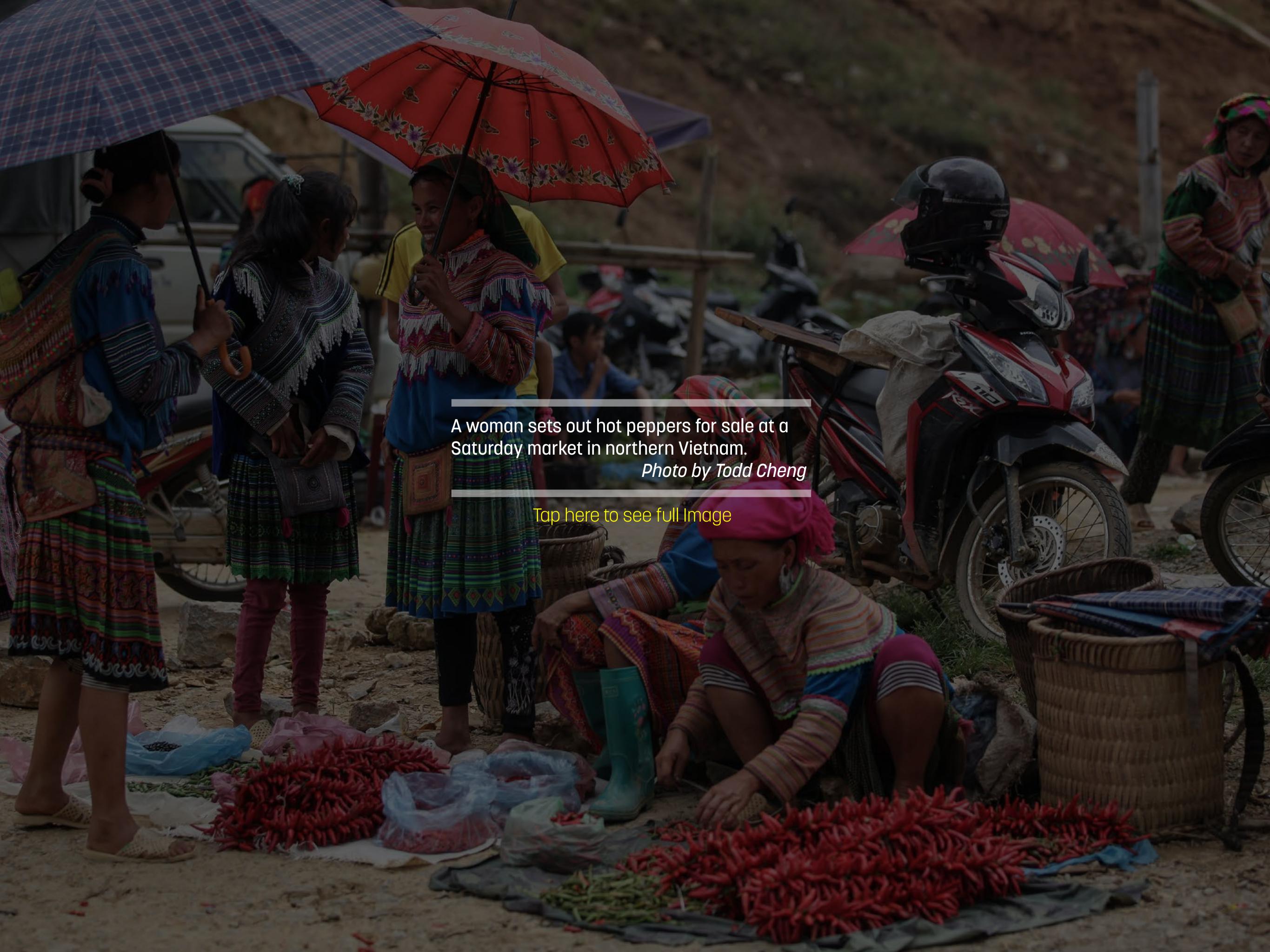
largest importer of Vietnamese products.

It is in this rapidly evolving context that Mission Vietnam's work is so critical. Nearly 20 years to the day since the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam normalized diplomatic relations (July 1995), Ambassador Ted Osius spoke to a large group of Vietnamese-Americans about the importance of a renewed, constructive relationship between two former adversaries. After he finished, an older Vietnamese man came up to him, grabbed him by the lapels, and asked how America could seek closer ties with a country that had imprisoned him in a re-education camp for 13 years. In retelling the story to embassy staff later, the ambassador neatly summed up the challenge that we all face in this fascinating country at this important time: the need to remember the past as we look forward and find areas where we can work together. "If we don't engage," the ambassador said, "we don't have a say." Secretary of State Kerry echoed this sentiment, saying, "Today, when Americans hear the word Vietnam, they are able to think of a country, not a war."

In Vietnam, views toward the United States are now overwhelmingly positive. According to recent studies by the Pew Research Center and the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 92 percent of Vietnamese surveyed favor closer ties









Ho Chi Minh City Consular Officer
Cameron Thomas-Shah (left) shows
Deputy Secretary of State Tony
Blinken how to make a spring roll.

Photo by Cameron Thomas-Shah

with the United States, with no divergent opinions between the northern and southern regions of the country. This may initially seem surprising given the turbulent history of the relationship, but today the two countries share interests in trade, the environment, science and technology, and health cooperation, among other key issues. The United States has even begun to slowly and cautiously develop security and military-to-military relationships, cooperation almost unimaginable only a few years ago. As a new cadre of 21st-century, globally minded leaders begins to take over top positions in Vietnam, topics previously tainted by suspicion and mistrust have become areas for new cooperative efforts. From negotiating the complex Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement to coordinating multilateral diplomatic efforts to resolve South China Sea issues and combating the global threat of wildlife trafficking, there are always new opportunities to expand the relationship.

All of this has given mission officials a lot of work to do, particularly with the 20th anniversary underlining Vietnam's key role in the U.S. strategic rebalance to Asia. Since January, Mission Vietnam has hosted Secretary Kerry, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman, second lady Dr. Jill Biden, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader



The sun rises over a temple near the Emperor's tomb in Hue, which was the capital of Vietnam for roughly 150 years. It is now a popular tourism location, and a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Photo by Michael Warfield



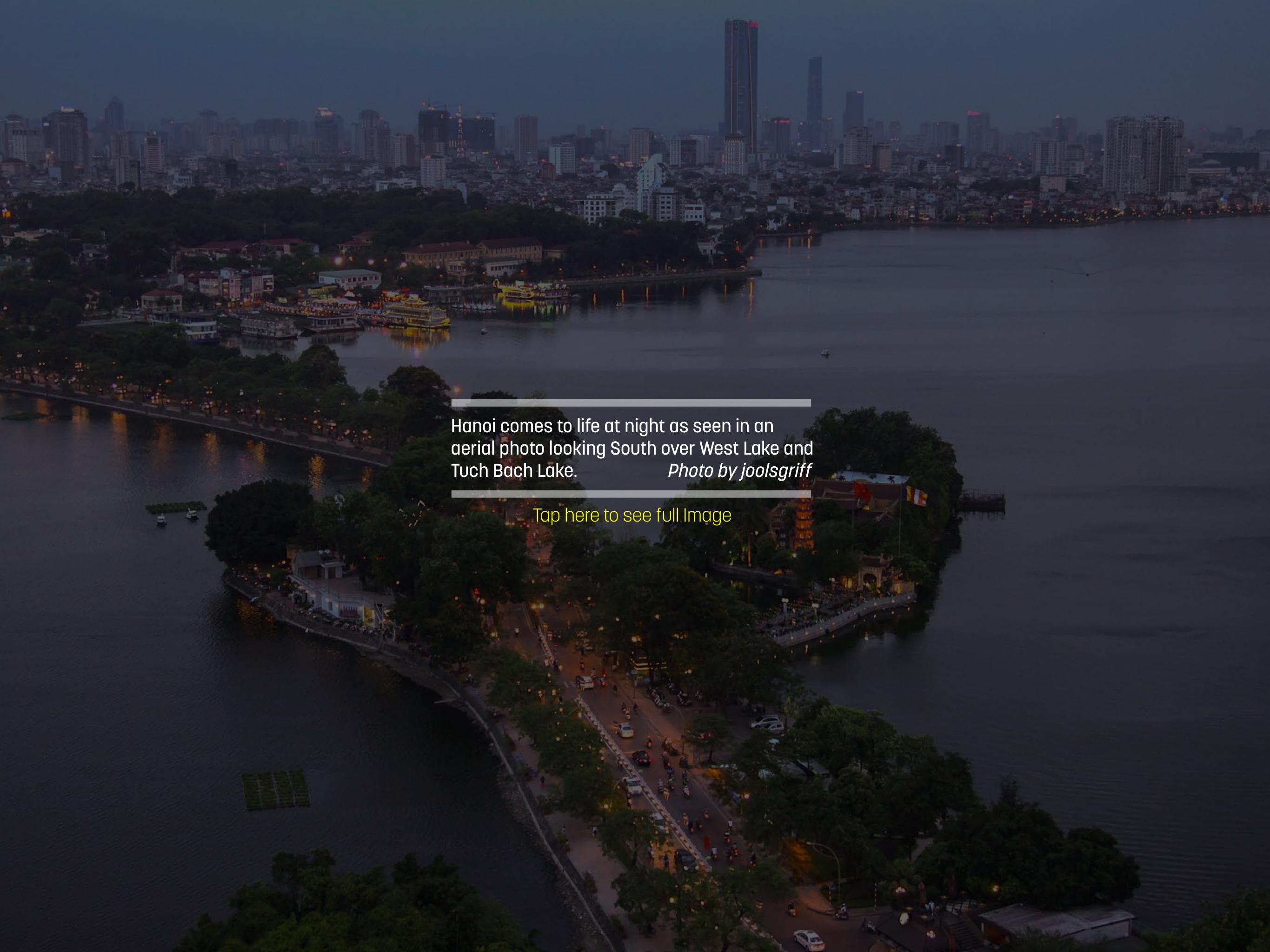
Secretary Kerry visits with Hanoi's Marine Security Guard Detachment during his trip to Vietnam in August.

Photo by Glen Johnson

Ginsburg, Senator John McCain, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, former President Bill Clinton and many others. Still, despite their workload, mission officials are enthusiastic and excited to serve in Vietnam at this special time, and often extend their assignments for an additional year. "These days, Vietnam is abuzz with the two-way traffic of senior delegations, from the historic visit of the Communist Party general secretary to Washington to the rapid-fire lineup of cabinet secretaries and congressional delegations to Hanoi," said Alex Dunoye, second-tour officer in the consular section. "The opportunity to witness and contribute to these sorts of historic events is one of the reasons I joined the Foreign Service."

Looking to the future, environmental cooperation holds tremendous potential for Vietnam and its regional and international partners. Half of urban Vietnamese surveyed say environmental issues are the most important issues facing their nation, more than crime, traffic safety or territorial







Children from a local orphanage are the beneficiaries of Embassy Hanoi MED Unit's food drive, held in conjunction with the Hanoi Marine Security Guard detachment's annual Toys for Tet event.

Photo by Vu Phuong

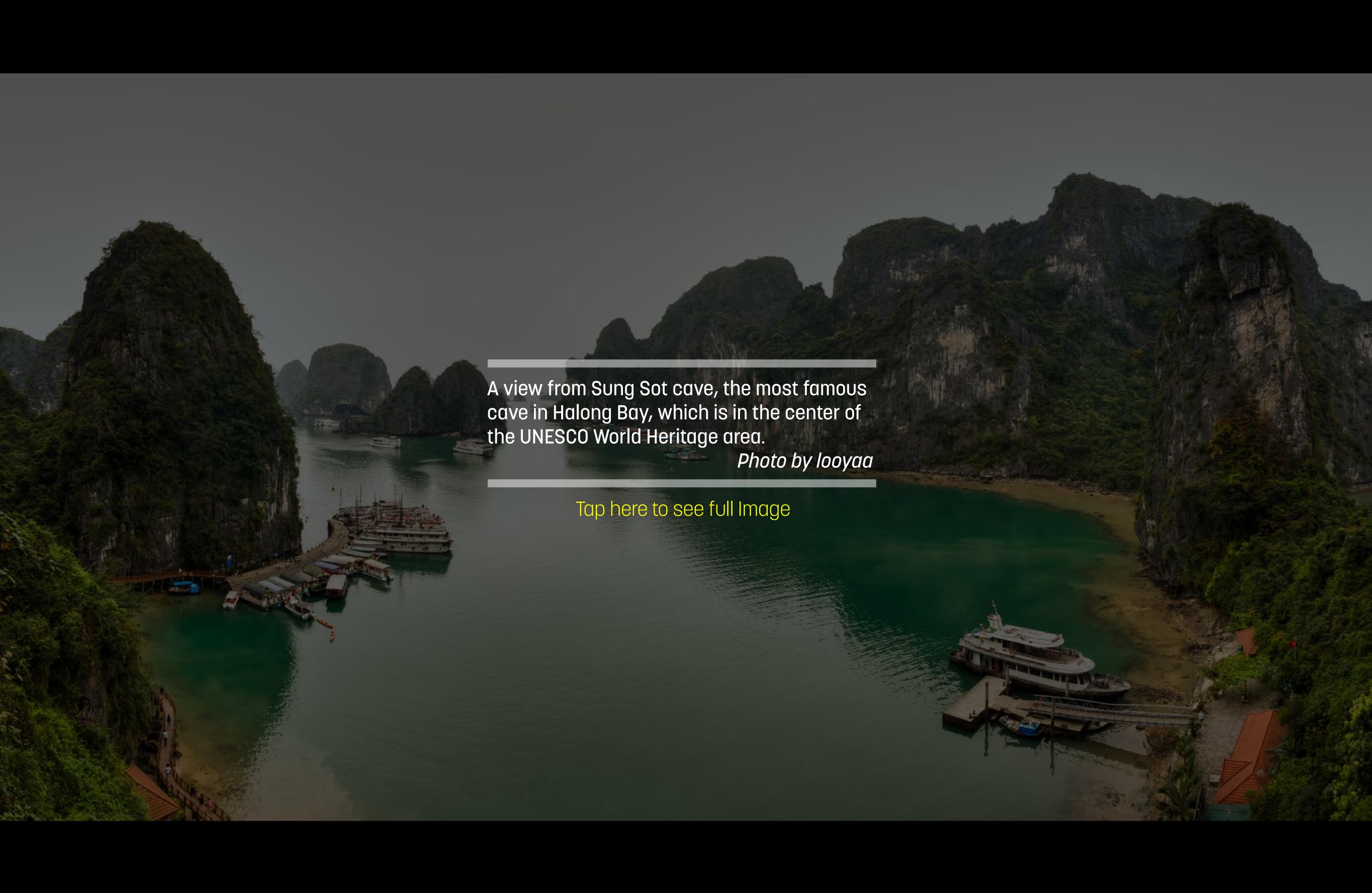
disputes with China. Issues such as wildlife trafficking and climate change have emerged as challenges that encourage new environmental partnerships. Vietnam is a country in high-demand for rhino horn and other endangered wildlife products, for their supposed health benefits. In coordination with the U.S. government, Vietnam is ramping up to combat this global issue.

Vietnam is also one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. The mission works closely with the host government to provide assistance on a bilateral and regional basis, while USAID is working to build Vietnam's capacity to adapt to climate change and minimize its greenhouse gas emissions.

There is no greater symbol of how far the U.S. mission has come and how far it can go than its ties in the field of education. Educational diplomacy has been a cornerstone of the U.S.-Vietnam relationship, starting even before the normalization of relations with the launch of Fulbright exchanges and the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program, which have helped bring market economics to midlevel provincial officials for 20 years. These programs have

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fostered people-to-people ties from the ground up, so that today alumni are found in leadership positions in all sectors of society. As the country has prospered, the number of Vietnamese youth at U.S. universities has also skyrocketed, from only approximately 800 Vietnamese studying in the United States 20 years ago to nearly 17,000 today. In recognition of the unique relationship with Vietnam, the United States is also a key supporter of the Fulbright University Vietnam project, which will bring the first private, not-for-profit American-style university to Vietnam. This will be an important tool to promote academic partnerships with U.S. institutions in fields of critical importance.

All this expanded cooperation and increased workforce in Hanoi and HCMC has strained mission office space. The dilapidated and undersized chancery of the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi was always meant to be a temporary location. In fact, the first time State Magazine covered Hanoi as Post of the Month in 1997, the author wrote, "the search is already on for a site for a new embassy." Today, negotiations continue with the Vietnamese government for an appropriate site. The consulate in HCMC, built on the site of the previous U.S. Embassy in Saigon, opened in 1999. Visitors can walk around the grassy field that once housed the old embassy and marvel that this building witnessed the dramatic, iconic evacuation in 1975 and is now only feet away from the visa lines and public diplomacy center that mark our current relationship.

Twenty years into our ever-strengthening partnership with Vietnam, the next 20 years look equally challenging and rewarding for both countries. Increased cooperation is paramount on the agenda, but so are many thorny issues, such as human rights and implementation of the TPP. But the mission team knows that this partnership will achieve its fullest potential if both sides remain frank and open where we have differences. As Pete Peterson, the first U.S. ambassador to serve in Hanoi says, "Nothing is impossible." Mission Vietnam proves that adage every day. \square

Post of the Month Sidebar Talking My Lanquage: Ambassador's fluency is a hit

♦ Pull tab then scroll

Talking My Language: Ambassador's fluency is a hit

By Andrew Shepard, environment, science, technology, and health (ESTH) officer at Embassy Hanoi

"Xin chào, các bạn," he says as he enters a room of enthusiastic

Vietnamese students. Since arriving in Hanoi in December 2014, Ambassador Ted Osius has used all the public diplomacy tools at his

disposal to raise the profile of the United States in Vietnam. He has more than 19,000 fans on Facebook and is popular within the Vietnam-

ese government as well. But how exactly does a career diplomat command this kind of

attention? Ambassador Osius first served in Vietnam from 1996 to 1998 as a

political officer in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). Then, he traveled extensively and developed a love for the country and its people. He once biked the 1,200-mile trip from Hanoi to HCMC. On his trek, he met an older Vietnam-

ese woman who spoke about how American bombs had destroyed her village. When he told her that he worked for the U.S. government, she replied: "Hôm nay, chúng ta là chị em (Now, you and I are sister and brother)." The Vietnamese language cele-

brates closeness and familiarity, and proficiency in it can be an extremely effective diplomatic tool. As ambassador, Osius uses every opportunity to speak in Vietnamese with those in government and at schools, local businesses and NGOs. He has recorded public service announcements on protecting the environment in Vietnamese and greeted

university student groups in Vietnamese. In discussing the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement, he often refers to his favorite legends about ancient Vietnamese kings who overcame adversity to "It is impossible to overempha-

protect the country. size how warmly the Vietnamese respond to the ambassador's proficiency with their language and cul-

ture," said Joe Narus, a second-tour economic officer. This warmth has allowed the mission to make significant progress on important policy goals regarding trade, the environment and even human rights. As a co-founder of GLIFAA (formerly, Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies) and America's first openly gay ambassador in Asia, Osius epitomizes America's policies of diversity and overcoming prejudices of the past,

and has been an inspiration to the increasingly visible LGBT community in Vietnam. Beyond language, his deep affec-

tion for the Vietnamese people and their language, history and culture has made it easier for the two nations to focus on common interests and goals. "Vietnamese is not an

easy language for most of us, but

speaking it shows respect to our

respect goes a long way here."

hosts," Ambassador Osius said, "and

Vietnam At A Glance



Glance VIETNAM

Capital: Hanoi

Government Type: Communist state

Area: 331,210 sq km

Population: 94,348,835

Cities: Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon, 7.3 million), Hanoi (3.6 million), Can Tho (1.2), Haiphong (1.1)

Languages: Vietnamese, English, some French, Chinese, Khmer

Religions: Buddhist (9.3%), Catholic (6.7%), Hoa Hao (1.5%), Cao Dai (1.1%), Protestant (0.5%), none (81%)

Export partners: U.S., China, Japan, South Korea

Import partners: China, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, U.S.

Currency: Vietnamese dong

Internet country code: .vn

* The CIA World Factbook





Help in the Heartland

Policy advisors have global impact

By Richard W. Nelson, foreign policy advisor, U.S. Transportation Command

cott Air Force Base (AFB) in southern Illinois, 20 miles from downtown St. Louis, is perhaps the last place you'd expect to see American diplomats on the job. The base is home to the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), one of three functional, unified combatant commands in the U.S. military.

The command is responsible for global aeromedical evacuation, including that of Department of State personnel and American citizens, when called upon to help. Its airborne at USTRANSCOM; one at Air tankers support aerial refueling, and its fleet of aircraft for senior officials'

travel includes Air Force One. Its Navy component, meanwhile, manages a flotilla that supports warfighters and allied nations around the world.

In 2014, USTRANSCOM and its components coordinated one of the most complex logistics challenges in history, moving more than \$30 billion in equipment and vehicles out of Afghanistan.

At Scott AFB, four Foreign Service officers serve as foreign policy advisors (POLADs): two Mobility Command (AMC), USTRANSCOM's Air Force

component; and one at the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), the command's Army component. Assisted by a Department of Defense (DOD) exchange officer and executive assistant, "Team POLAD" ensures that global military logistics operations are fully aligned with the nation's security and foreign policy objectives.

For instance, in the move of equipment and vehicles out of Afghanistan, the POLADs at Scott AFB ensured the effort had the needed access agreements for land transportation and overflight in nations throughout South and Central Asia and Europe.

The POLADs at Scott AFB are part of a global enterprise that includes 90 FSOs supporting major U.S. military



Congressman Rodney Davis of Illinois, center, meets with the author in January at USTRANSCOM headquarters for the launch of the Transportation Isolation System for evacuation of patients with communicable diseases. Photo by Richard W. Nelson



commands in 11 states, the District of Columbia and eight foreign countries. Officially, POLADs are Department of State officers serving as the senior civilian foreign policy advisor to a military command.

But, as illustrated by our team, the job description is not that simple.

As a management officer, I sought the POLAD position at USTRANSCOM because it's the combatant command most directly involved in logistical issues. My predecessor at the command, Ambassador Dennise Mathieu, called the position a "hidden gem" in the

POLAD community.

Former Deputy POLAD Kwang Kim was a Foreign Service management specialist who capitalized on the experience he gained here to become a generalist. He came to USTRANSCOM seeking interagency experience and left with a DOD award and an onward assignment as management officer in China. "I had a fantastic time at TRANSCOM," Kim told the annual POLAD conference in April. Kim was an integral member of the

command's Enterprise Readiness Center and worked to improve procedures when the Department of State uses the Defense transportation system in crisis situations, such

and disaster relief.

Kim's replacement at USTRANSCOM, Rachel Wolfe, is a political officer, as is SDDC's POLAD, Jason Wemhoener-Cuite.



General McDew poses with the author at USTRANSCOM headquarters in July. Photo by USTRANSCOM Public Affairs



economic officer. All say they were attracted by USTRANSCOM's global reach, which requires them to track emerging developments worldwide and develop expertise on U.S. policies

in every region. Together, we POLADs have served at posts in all of State's regional bureaus and in several functional bureaus.

"I wanted to help State and DOD work together to achieve national goals, and my work on the Ebola response [at USTRANSCOM] was a perfect opportunity," said Wemhoener-Cuite. He added that he



Team POLAD gathers in September in Belleville, III. From left are Daniel Jassem, POLAD at AMC; Aracely Walker, executive assistant in the POLAD office at USTRANSCOM; Rachel Wolfe, deputy POLAD at USTRANSCOM; Andrew Corwin, former deputy POLAD at USTRANSCOM; the author; Nathaniel Smith, former deputy POLAD at USTRANSCOM; Sandra Moody, deputy POLAD at USTRANSCOM; and Jason Wemhoener-Cuite, POLAD at SDDC. Photo by Richard W. Nelson

quickly shifted priorities to providing first-hand accounts on operating in West Africa and working with embassy personnel in the region. Wemhoener-Cuite found SDDC broadly engaged in the affected region, which "meant that before that mission was complete, I was already turning to other issues, like negotiations on port repairs in Japan.

"I can't imagine a more

stimulating environment, though I never thought I would be doing all this in the middle of the Illinois cornfields," he enthused.

Having worked closely with the defense attaché office in overseas assignments, Jassem said he wanted to expand his expertise by becoming in August, says she sought the an advisor to a four-star general. As a POLAD, Jassem ensured that AMC and the Bureau of Near

East Affairs (NEA) collaborated on the movement of aircraft to resupply residual U.S. forces in Yemen immediately after closure of the U.S. embassy there. "Given the rebel takeover of Sanaa, it was a tricky proposition, but we got it done," he observed.

Jassem won praise from State and DOD when his interventions ensured the timely return of the remains of U.S. service members killed while conducting earthquake relief in Nepal. "With just hours before the flight departed, we persuaded the Pakistani government to authorize overflight," he recalled.

Wolfe, who joined the team assignment for career development "beyond traditional political officer work." She finds USTRANSCOM's

mission as DOD's transportation and distribution synchronizer "fascinating" because she interacts daily with generals and flag-level officers and civilian experts. "The work environment is invigorating, and I'm learning how the military manages logistics on a massive scale," she said.

USTRANSCOM's commander, Air Force Gen. Darren McDew, has served in the White House and as a military liaison on Capitol Hill, and therefore emphasizes the whole-ofgovernment approach to military planning and operations. "We cannot be successful without a strong collaborative relationship between DOD and State," McDew said. "Our POLAD team performs a vital function, ensuring that we operate seamlessly to achieve national goals."





The author, center, meets with members of the Philippine Logistics Delegation at USTRANSCOM headquarters. At left is Major Rhanjee Lao of the Philippine Air Force, at right is Captain Gaudencio Collado of the Philippine Navy.

Photo by USTRANSCOM Public Affairs

Navy Vice Adm. William "Andy"
Brown, USTRANSCOM's former
deputy commander, said the POLAD
team's work has resulted in "much
stronger political-military relationships
with our partner nations."

As the senior POLAD at Scott, I've traveled frequently worldwide with the USTRANSCOM commander to build and maintain relationships with foreign militaries and defense ministries in collaboration with

the U.S. military's six geographic combatant commands. These relationships are crucial to ensure access to vital ports and airfields in support of active military operations and contingencies.

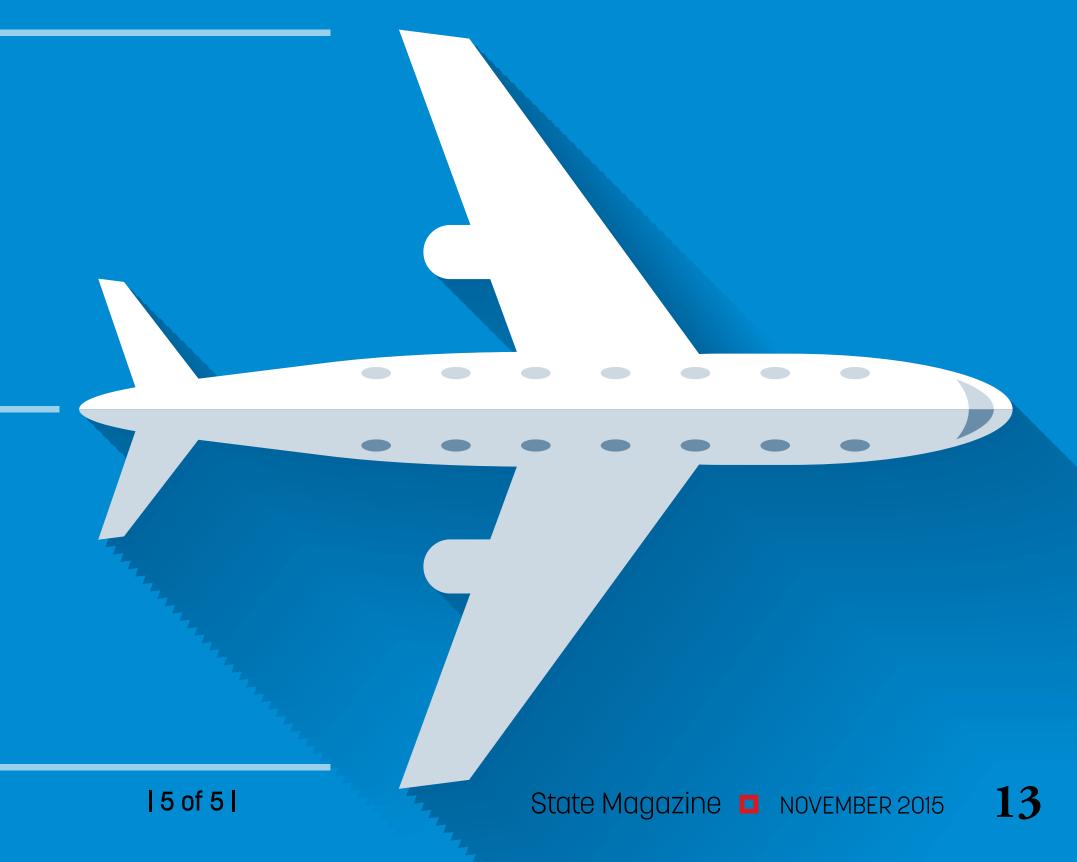
To maintain the security relationships, McDew's immediate predecessor, Gen. Paul Selva, and I traveled this year to Israel, Jordan and the Gulf States, bolstering the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and

the Levant and operations in Yemen. We also traveled to the Baltic States to assess logistical support requirements for NATO missions, and to Spain, Italy and Greece to ensure access to ports and bases crucial for U.S. security and counterterrorism objectives in Europe, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. In Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Romania, we sought to reinforce access to the transit routes that coalition nations need in Afghanistan.

All members of Team POLAD at Scott participate in outreach events at area universities and

civic organizations. I also serve on the board of the World Affairs Council of St. Louis, which has brought Washington-based foreign ambassadors and other senior officials to speak at events with business leaders and others involved in international affairs.

McDew applauds State and
Defense for supporting the POLAD
program. "Our POLADs in the
heartland," he says, "truly are making
a global impact, and they embody the
USTRANSCOM motto: 'Together,
We Deliver."



Story and photos by Aldrinana Leung, global partnerships advisor, Office of Global Partnerships

t a camp for girls in Africa this summer, delighted screams erupted as three robotic cars raced toward a finish line. As two cars veered off course, the winner received thunderous cheers.

This was not your typical summer camp—it was the first Women in Science (WiSci)

camp, part of a program that aims to reduce the gender gap in the critical fields of science,



|1 of 5 |

Opening Spread:

WiSci campers line up their robotic cars in the first race against their classmates.

technology, engineering, art and design, and mathematics (STEAM).

A total of 120 girls came to Rwanda from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and the United States under the program to gain skills and hands-on experience in science and technology. The three-week camp, held from July 25 to Aug. 15 at the Gashora Girls Academy, was made possible through a public-private partnership between the Department and Microsoft, Intel, the AOL Charitable Foundation, the United Nations Foundation's Girl Up campaign and the Rwanda Girls Initiative, exploring an innovative approach to international exchanges.

The idea of a science and technology camp for girls originated on the sidelines of the U.S.-Africa Leaders
Summit held in August 2014. There,
African governments and U.S.
technology companies expressed a
commitment to supporting girls'
education and expanding economic
opportunities for women.

WiSci leveraged the unique capacity, resources and networks of partners, including Microsoft and Intel's technical expertise, AOL's marketing and communications skills and Girl Up's leadership in empowering girls. The curriculum was codesigned by the partners, with partner representatives

leading sessions both inside and outside the classroom.

"The WiSci
partnership opened
up a new opportunity
for true global
collaboration between
governments,
nonprofits, and public
and private industry
to transform STEAM
strategy into action
and empower girls
to see themselves as
creators of technology

Girls at the WiSci write computer code for a virtual reality game.

and world changers," said Gabriela
A. Gonzalez, who leads Intel's Global
K-12 STEAM engagement strategy.

"It was truly amazing to witness the transformation of the girls as they learned new skills and realized their own power to influence their future and change their world."



The camp was part of the Let Girls Learn initiative championed by first lady Michelle Obama to expand educational opportunities for girls around the world.

During the first week, campers were introduced to Microsoft's visual programming platform, Kodu. In pairs, the girls tackled projects with multiple levels of difficulty and designed their own games, creatively programming tasks and defining rules in a 3D simulation environment.

The second week challenged the girls to combine their coding skills with engineering. Guided by Intel instructors, campers carefully built their own robotic cars, starting with a Galileo computer board and working through multiple stages involving batteries, Wi-Fi cards, LED lights and even hot glue guns. The girls used the C++ language to program the cars to execute turns and display fun messages on the small screen.

The campers next formed small groups to address a challenge of their choosing during the final week. Their projects included embedding sensors in jewelry to detect date rape drugs,



USAID's Aimee Mpambara discusses her career path and experiences during an "office hour" session.

installing automated monitors to prevent overcrowding on public buses and improving water efficiency through smart agricultural technology. AOL staff offered helpful tips on digital marketing and product pitching, while UNESCO officials offered entrepreneurship training in socially-oriented mobile application design through its YouthMobile program.

Rwandan first lady Jeannette Kagame, U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda J. Erica Barks-Ruggles and other guests had a chance to visit the final

project displays and hear well-rehearsed team pitches, while judges from the camp's organizing partners assessed the projects in the categories of innovation, social impact, entrepreneurship, presentation and technical rigor.

The award for entrepreneurship went to a project called Monkey Money that aims to improve city cleanliness by incentivizing recycling. The project team had designed a model for a smart trash bin that uses sensors to record deposits and awards points to those using the bin, that would be redeemable at local



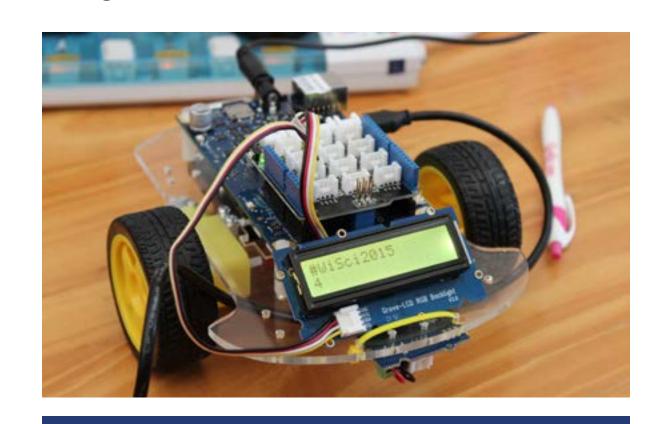
convenience stores. The girls plan to implement their project in a suburb of Johannesburg in the coming school year.

As much as the WiSci camp focused on STEAM skills, the camp also focused on leadership development, crosscultural exchange and mentorship, with numerous learning opportunities outside the formal classroom.

The camp was also the first time spent away from home for many girls, who had to quickly adjust to living and learning with others from different cultures, especially in close communal quarters. The campers showcased their countries during the camp's culture nights, teaching others a few words in their native languages, showing photos of the cultural and natural diversity and inviting fellow campers to share in their passion for dance. They also learned about the host country through a traditional Rwandan dance lesson and visits to the Kigali Genocide Memorial, Akagera National Park and a local fish farm.

The campers were also encouraged

to learn about careers in the STEAM fields from visiting mentors who had experience and expertise in related areas. For many African girls, having both a successful professional career and a family is not a common option, so the camp emphasized showcasing women from various backgrounds and fields, including young African professionals.



A robotic car is programmed to display the social media hashtag #WiSci2015.

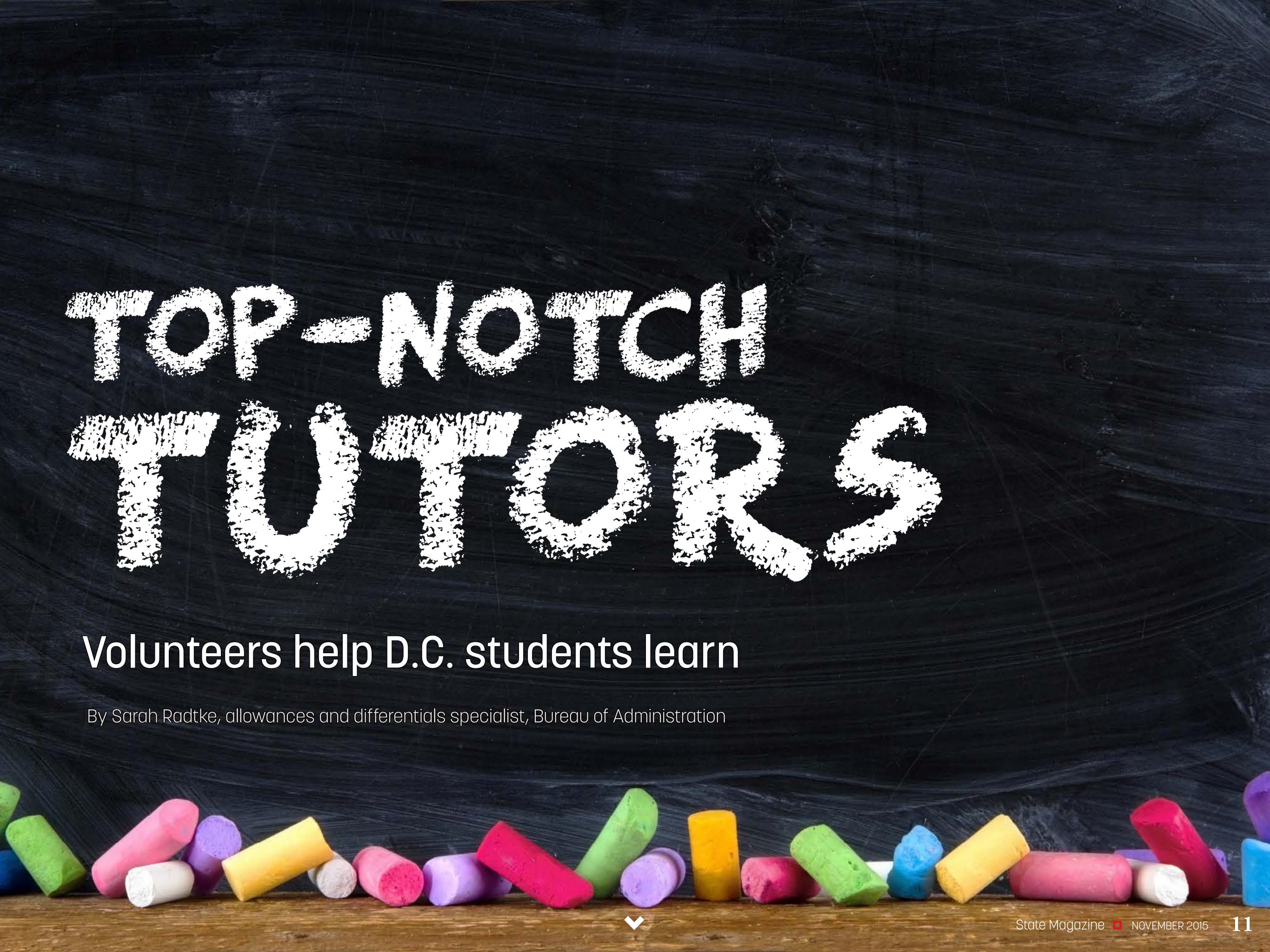
Although the camp has ended, the campers continue to swap stories over Facebook, and the girls are taking advantage of opportunities to challenge themselves and inspire others. The U.S. Mission in Nigeria, for instance, will host two-day STEM Rocks! workshops focusing strictly on science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The

Workshops, to be held at five American Corners across the country over the next year, will create a space for girls to explore STEM fields with exposure to interactive technology and role models, including the WiSci campers and TechWomen alumnae. In October, the U.S. Mission to UNESCO also sponsored two campers to share their WiSci experiences at the UNESCO Youth Forum in Paris.

Despite their young age, the WiSci campers are already showing great technical ability and leadership skills. As one camper put it, "One amazing thing that I came out with is believing that I have the potential to be a leader. I'd never ever thought of myself like that."

The partners will all be eagerly waiting to see what the girls accomplish next—from starting robotics clubs, to pursuing degrees in STEAM or STEM areas and careers as engineers, doctors and possibly even as a future Minister of Science and Technology.

More stories from the WiSci camp are on the WiSci Huffington Post blog series or on social media at #wisci2015. □



or the past 18 years, Department of State volunteers have tutored at Miner Elementary School in Northeast Washington, D.C. The roughly 100 volunteers take an hour out of their work week on Tuesdays or Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. to tutor fourth- and fifth-graders during the school year in reading comprehension and math. The Department provides shuttle service to and from the Harry S Truman Building (HST) and Rosslyn offices for the tutors going to Miner Elementary.

The program was begun in 1998 by FSO John Arbogast, now at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. in New York. "When we started," Arbogast said, "it was all about mobilizing the federal workforce to help those in need



in our own backyard." He lauded longtime volunteers
Audrey Thurman, Mamie Minor, Carlene Pryor, Donna
Butler and Jon Gundersen for "not only keeping the
program going, but taking it in new directions as well."

Pryor began tutoring at Miner in 1999 and finds it "a positive way to affect students' lives and learning." She said she enjoys getting to know them and making them feel comfortable with her. "Sharing stories about my school experiences, reading books that I once read, encourages the students," she continued. "Adding games, activities and art projects helps to motivate the children to want to learn more. It lets them know that they are doing a great job and that I'm proud of them. It also helps me feel valued and needed."

Gundersen began with the program in 2002 and has continued since entering semiretirement in 2004. Now a WAE employee, he estimates he has tutored more than 12 youths. "They all have a thirst for knowledge," he said, adding that tutoring has become a way of coping with job stress. At workday's end, "it's a joy (and challenge) to see the bright and eager faces of the Miner kids," he said. "Whatever field they choose—be it as a teacher or a doctor or a police officer or even a Foreign Service officer—I am confident they will serve their community and our nation well."

Thurman, who began tutoring at the school during the 1998–1999 school year, spoke of what she called the effort's many rewards and her appreciation of how

well-disciplined and talented the children are and their "wonderful spirit."

Tutor Mamie Minor was one of those who joined while Arbogast was running the program, and she recalled "his fondness for the children and dedication that spilled over to all of us." She also credits the school's principal and then-Secretary of State Colin Powell, who "was very instrumental in our being able to keep this program running."

"For 18 years, we've shared lives and encouraged learning experiences with the kids," she said.

This year's partnership, begun in late September, involves a "Tutor Share" effort to let employees who want to participate do so despite work-related travel

or meetings. The sharing effort means some tutors such as Daniel "Blake" Pritchett assign their student to a colleague. The tutor can then tell his or her student stories of travels to far-off places, and this often inspires

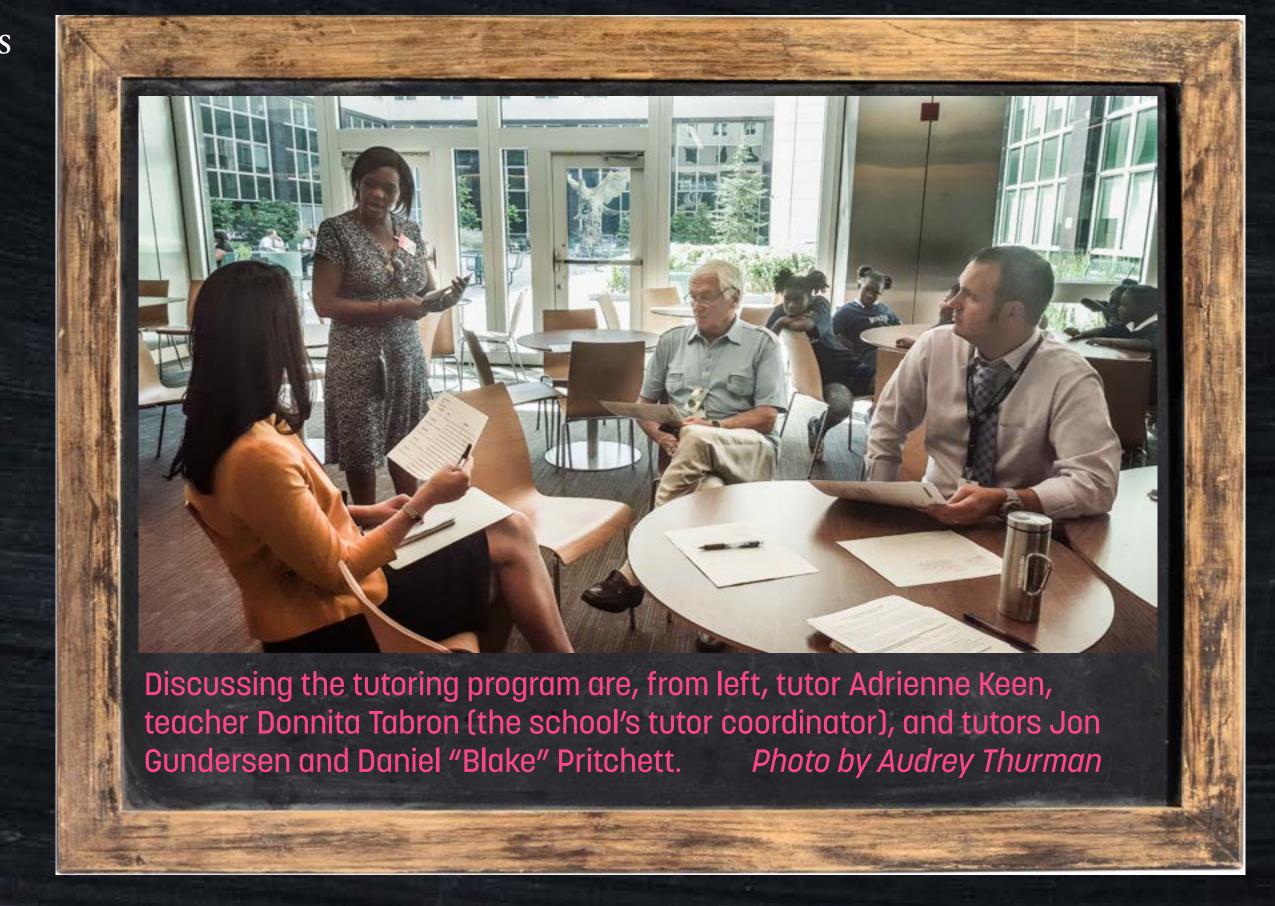
students to find a world atlas in the school library for a quick geography lesson.

The tutoring program has also always involved students coming to Department headquarters to put on performances or participate in such activities as Take Your Child to Work Day. At this year's tutor orientation in the HST cafeteria, the school's choir of more than three dozen students gave a concert; they will again perform at the tutoring program's holiday party in mid-December.

Tutor Will Stewart calls his experiences at the school "some of the most rewarding involvements of my life." He says a career at State "is not completely fulfilled until one has been involved in a partnership to some degree. I have been on every continent of the globe, but in all of

my endeavors, there is nothing more worthwhile than mentoring an hour per week at Miner Elementary."

To get involved in the Miner
Elementary School tutoring, contact the author, the program's coordinator at



Bridge to Youth

Local students intern at consulate in Vietnam

By Joseph Freeman, former information officer, U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City

ith more than 50 percent of Vietnam's population under the age of 30, connecting with youth is vital to public diplomacy efforts for the Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). One means is the post's Foreign National Student Intern Program, under which local interns help the public affairs section (PAS) manage the approximately 80,000 visits per year to post's American Center (AC) and serve as the consulate's ambassadors to the youth community.

Because they're undergraduate students at local universities, the interns are wellplaced to attract their peers for AC programs and services. They are also the first generation to have grown up after the normalization of bilateral relations, which

gives them a unique perspective on the United States and Vietnam.

PAS began offering internships to Vietnamese undergraduates in March 2012. From five interns that year, the program has grown to 18 students. Interns are recruited with the support of the human resources office and serve for six-month periods, based on the Foreign National Student Intern Program Guidance from the Bureau of Human Resource's Office of Overseas Employment. They must be currently enrolled undergraduates or recent graduates, at least 18 years of age and have a proficiency in written and spoken English.

Once selected, they get an orientation to the consulate general and PAS. Their ongoing training includes public speaking,



One of the interns, right, explains library services to a patron. Department of State photo

library management, customer service, marketing, photography/videography and report writing. They meet monthly with PAS officers and at least once during their term with Consul General Rena Bitter.

"Every time I meet with the interns or attend an event at the American Center that they are running," Bitter said, "it makes me proud of the efforts we have made to give these Vietnamese youth this unique opportunity. Bringing them into an American-style workplace can be a lifechanging experience, opening their eyes sometimes even to their own potential."

Because of a complete renovation this year of the AC and EducationUSA, supported by the Bureau of International Information Program's Model American

Spaces project, the facilities are now colocated, and PAS cross-brands all their programming. Visitors, whether coming to attend a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC), check out a book from the library or meet with an EducationUSA advisor, first meet a PAS intern. The interns wear T-shirts with AC and EducationUSA logos, giving patrons a visual indicator of whom to ask for assistance.

Interns staff the AC's library, lab or lounge throughout the day, and are trained to work at all of them. For instance, they can oversee the library, which lends more than 1,000 titles per month, or schedule EducationUSA advising appointments, 100 of which occur per month, or manage video lending in the lounge area. They also assist AC programs by taking pictures for post's social media outlets and managing visitor check-ins.

The interns also participate in public engagement occurring at venues other than the AC. In January, they biked through HCMC with Ambassador Ted Osius in one of his first major public outings, an event garnering heavy local media coverage that showed him and the interns riding and talking together.

Reflecting their value as direct connections to their peers, the interns assisted post's spring 2015 education fair in HCMC, where EducationUSA staff organized a marketing competition for them. The winner was the one who brought the most participants from his or her school to the fair.

The training and American-style experiences the interns receive would be otherwise hard to come by in Vietnam. That means they stand out when considered by prospective employers and American colleges. The interns also gain a broader sense of U.S. policies and values. After their six months at the AC, they receive certificates of appreciation and the information officer signs evaluation forms they need to get credit from their university.

After their "tours," the interns remain connected to the U.S. mission, with many returning as volunteers for events and joining other U.S.-sponsored programs. Five former interns have attended regional workshops of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, and six have gone to the United States for graduate study. In the long term, they will be able to cite their experience as a major factor in their future success, creating a lasting bond to the United States and the U.S. Mission to Vietnam.

"The interns are an invaluable resource and the program is an important contribution to helping Vietnam develop future leaders who understand the United States," said Public Affairs Officer Alexander Titolo. "Watching them grow as individuals and learn about America over the time they are with us is one of the most rewarding experiences of working here in public affairs."



An intern assists visitors at the counter in the American Center's lounge. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City photos

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Office of the Month

Office of Criminal Justice Assistance and Partnership Experts aid nations' law enforcement personnel

By Lauren Danen, program support specialist, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

he Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs' Office of Criminal Justice Assistance and Partnership (INL/CAP) supports the emergence of stable democracies and rule of law overseas through programs to institutionalize effective and fair criminal justice, instill trust in the rule of law and protect human rights. It accomplishes this with a cadre of police, justice and corrections professionals who advise and help implement many INL-managed programs.

In Ukraine, INL/CAP partnered with American state and local law enforcement institutions to aid, expand and instill trust in a Ukrainian criminal justice system some saw as broken.

"They asked for cooperation and support from the government of the United States, and I was proud to do so on behalf of INL and the Department of State," said Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement William R.

Brownfield while in Odesa, Ukraine, during an open training day for the new police force. He said the city's new patrol police are performing exactly as they should, and that citizens of Odesa, like citizens of any U.S. city, "want the same thing from their police."

Ukrainians once viewed their criminal justice system as corrupt and ineffective, so the new Ukrainian government wanted to reform it, beginning with police and prosecutorial services. In early 2015, it requested U.S. technical assistance to improve

OFFICE OF THE MONTH



CAP staff member Melody Jackson (center, standing) poses with the Miami-Dade Police Department and the Guatemalan National Civil Police during a Tactical Life-Saving Training course conducted by the MDPD.



CAP peacekeeping team member Janna Lipman, second from right, reports in at the opening ceremony for an INL-funded training in Burkina Faso in 2014. The effort sought to increase the number of female police peacekeepers deployed to U.N. missions.

Photo by Janna Lipman

its police and prosecutors' ability to combat corruption and strengthen their quality.

In response, INL developed a program to assist the Ukraine Ministry of Interior to develop, recruit, vet, train and equip this new force with the help of two premier U.S. law enforcement agencies, including the California Highway Patrol (CHP), which provided training and mentoring, and skills and expertise in patrol. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) —the Texas Rangers—helped facilitate a SWAT-training program. Both efforts arose because of existing partnerships INL/CAP had with the police agencies.

As part of the <u>Ukraine program</u>, CHP officers train their Ukrainian counterparts in Kyiv. Since March, U.S. law enforcement officers working under INL/CAP-facilitated partnerships have helped train more than 100 new Ukrainian patrol police instructors, who have since gone on to train 4,800 new police officers throughout Ukraine.

INL/CAP's contribution to reform initiatives in Ukraine goes beyond this effort. With the help of other federal, state, and local partners across the justice, corrections, and police sectors, CAP supports fundamental reforms of Ukraine's entire criminal justice system.

For example, INL assisted the Ukraine Deputy Prosecutor General's Office to establish and name a new inspector general unit. Since its creation this year, the unit has recruited a small but dedicated staff to tackle endemic corruption within the office.

Meanwhile, INL/CAP's partnership with the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office played a critical role in assisting the new inspector general unit to become more operational and effective, for instance, by deploying

two assistant attorneys general to Ukraine to work with their Ukrainian counterparts. They discussed the forms, goals, tactics and methods of internal investigations; the unit's organizational structure; key processes and procedures for internal investigations, sting operations, and the protection of sensitive information; and how the new unit could utilize current technology.

Beyond Ukraine, INL/CAP supports INL programs in more than 90 countries, often with its pool of American state and local criminal justice implementers. While the law enforcement and justice sectors are critical elements of any criminal justice system, reforming them is insufficient without the third criminal justice pillar—corrections. INL has nine partnerships with U.S. correctional agencies, each of which is helping build correctional systems for partner governments and several of which support Mexico as it works to reform its correctional system.



Miami-Dade police officers and Broward County Sheriff's Office deputies participate in a one-day predeployment course taught by CAP staff member Cindy Mosier, standing.

Photo by Melody Jackson

INL began its corrections-related involvement with the Mexican federal government in 2008, and since then has provided \$25 million in assistance for training, technical consultations and equipment to improve Mexico's prisons, focusing on helping facilities meet American Correction Association (ACA) accreditation standards. To date, there are 23 state and federal facilities in Mexico that meet these standards, which cover such issues as safety for inmates and staff, cleanliness, and policies and procedures.

The program also assisted in the establishment of the Correctional Training Academy in Xalapa, Veracruz, that nation's first professional corrections training center.

The partnership has been assisted by state correctional systems in California, New Mexico, and Colorado, and the



CAP Corrections Advisor Terry Kidwell (left), during an OC Spray demonstration with the Haitian DAP officers as part of an OC Spray Certification Course in Haiti.

*Photo by Tracie Davis**

U.S. Bureau of Prisons (BOP). "Over the past five years, New Mexico's Department of Corrections has, through INL/CAP, trained more than 500 Mexican academy instructors, who have in turn trained more than 7,800 Mexican penitentiary agents. The states of California and Colorado and the BOP have also trained hundreds of mid and senior-level managers, the foundation of sustainable reforms to Mexico's penitentiary system," explained CAP Corrections Team Lead Dara Duncan.

To prepare state and local partners for these important international missions, CAP's Mobile Training Team travels to the partner's locale to help understand its role and functions. The team also works closely with the U.S. embassy in that nation.

INL/CAP's reach extends beyond traditional criminal justice assistance to improve public security through peacekeeping operations and capacity building. In the last decade, the U.N. Security Council has authorized the rapid start-up or expansion of at least one new peacekeeping operation each year. Peacekeeping operations require strong law enforcement and civilian skills to execute such tasks as mediation among combatants, security sector reform, disarmament and imposition of the rule of law. To assist, INL/CAP manages the International Police Peacekeeping Operations Support (IPPOS) program and is an implementer of the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, which provides training, capacity building and logistical management to support the rapid deployment of police for international peacekeeping missions.

Since 2010, CAP has trained more than 6,000 police from Nepal, Jordan, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Cameroon and Rwanda for deployments to U.N. missions in Darfur, Liberia, South Sudan, Haiti, Mali

and the Central African Republic. IPPOS has also supported women's participation in police peacekeeping efforts, including a 2014 program in which INL supported workshops for female police applicants from African francophone countries who were taking the selection exam for deployment to peacekeeping missions. The pass rate of women increased from less than 40 percent to more than 70 percent, increasing the number of francophone female police officers in U.N. peacekeeping operations.

"Having more female participants in our programs is a win-win," said Janna Lipman, who serves on CAP's police peacekeeping program team.

As long as rule of law and criminal justice development needs exist, INL/CAP stands ready to respond.



A member of the CAP Police Peacekeeping Team, Janna Lipman, front center, poses with members of the Senegalese Gendarmerie Formed Police Unit during INL's predeployment training for the unit as it was deploying to the UN Mission in Mali in 2014.

Photo by Steward Sandoval

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for FSI's Raising Bilingual Children course, says the reasons parents decide to raise bilingual children include the fact that, in some cases, both parents speak two different languages and want their children to enjoy that benefit. Another reason: The family speaks one language but lives in a country that speaks a different language.

"Bilingual children have the advantage of knowing two

cultures, being able to communicate with a wider variety of people, and taking advantage of possible economic advantages in their future," she observed.

At the latest iteration of her class, on Sept. 23, she shared the stage with three youths who spoke of being raised bilingually in the Foreign Service. "Speaking more than one language allows you to have a greater degree of intimacy," said panelist



Members of the course's youth panel prepare to respond to a parent's question. From left are instructor Marjorie Myers and panelists Alexandra Duckworth, William Bonnett and Jordan Delgado, and panel moderator Fauve Johnson.

Photo by Michael Morrison

Alexandra Duckworth. "It has made me a more interesting person and has made me more open-minded."

Myers says FS parents can encourage bilingualism in their children by being committed to that goal and developing a bilingual language plan that outlines the parents' strategy to help their children acquire a second language. With the plan's primary technique identified, parents then need to consider other factors, such as what language they will speak to one another, what they will do if they are at a post where the target language they are teaching their children is not spoken, and whether they will change their technique from post to post or eventually plan to introduce a third language to their children.

The strategies a parent can use to raise bilingual children differ depending on the family and where it is posted. Those who speak two languages at home can use the "one parent-one language" strategy, in which one parent commits to speak one

language exclusively with the children while the other parent pledges to speak the second language.

Parents who do not speak two different languages at home can nonetheless raise bilingual children by enrolling them in a school teaching the target language, wherever they're posted. There's also the "minority language at home" strategy, in which the family aims to be posted to a specific region where the children are consistently exposed to the second language. For example, parents might spend their careers in Central and South America, where they commit to speak English at home but the children attend Spanish-speaking schools throughout childhood. Parents can also hire a nanny who speaks the target language. In either case, research suggests that parents should strive to expose their children to the second language for 30 percent of their waking time.

According to Myers, a baby is born prewired to speak any of the world's languages but slowly loses language abilities if they're not frequently used. Thus, researchers find it crucial to start children early in learning a second language. The critical years are between birth and age 3, and the ability to acquire a second language decreases by the time a child is 6 or 7.

Children are not language-learning "sponges" who pick up a second language effortlessly. Myers said a family must be intentional about language exposure

 \Diamond



LANGUAGE LESSON

to maximize the likelihood the child will learn the second language.

To encourage and motivate children to learn a second language, Myers said parents' attitudes toward each language are important, as are those of other family members, the school, community and the child. Both the first and second languages "must be given importance and worth in all aspects of a child's life," she emphasized. "Don't find yourself always praising your child in one language and punishing them in another."

The course's panelists offered ideas on what motivates them to study and maintain their second and third languages. Duckworth, for instance, cited a desire to stay connected to her extended family, which "has kept me rooted and connected throughout all of the moves." Panelist Jordan Delgado said she found ways to keep the language interesting and fun to learn, suggesting finding something the child already loves to do and doing it in that second language. Panelist William Bonnett said he played his video games in Spanish, for instance.

"If you cannot make the language fun," Delgado observed, "then you have to focus on making it important. Show your children the value of learning the language whether it is to stay connected to family, to help the child in the future or to make friends."

In sum, helping children become bilingual involves having and sticking with a plan, committing to the importance and value of each language a child learns, and meeting the child's motivational needs.

More information on this topic is on the course's <u>virtual resource table</u>.

FSI's Transition Center has several upcoming courses on raising children overseas, including <u>Encouraging Resilience in the Foreign Service Child</u> and <u>Special Education Needs Seminar</u>.

"If you cannot make the language fun then you have to focus on making it important. Show your children the value of learning the language whether it is to stay connected to family, to help the child in the future, or to make friends." - Panelist Jordan Delgado

AfterHours

'Apps' maker, FSI staffer creates free software for phones

By David Houston, program assistant, Foreign Service Institute

pen your computer's browser on a website and right-click the mouse to select "view page source." You'll then see all the HTML-language coding that underlies the page that, plus the computer coding done in CSS and Javascript. Though most people may find this material incomprehensible, I love it. For the past four years,

I've done coding as a hobby and sometimes professionally.

As a result of my efforts, I've released two applications, or apps, that run on smartphones. One is DiplomApp, for users to learn more about the Department of State; the other is Fugue, my online novel.

I first got into writing apps as a result of a 2011 ride on the New

York City subway. I was crossing into Manhattan and everyone on the train, a cross section of global society, was using a smartphone. Delving deeper, I saw a potential opportunity. I was a few years out of the Army and living in the Bronx, but at a professional and artistic crossroads. Then, I realized that people looking at their phones' screens gave me the chance to give them something more to look at.

Since then, I have traveled to four countries, had three jobs, attended two universities—and written thousands of lines of computer code.

And although my current position at the Foreign Service Institute has

nothing to do with programming, I continue to develop and maintain dozens of websites and several mobile apps.

DiplomApp is aimed at scholars and aspiring diplomats, and uses publicly available data maintained by the Department of State (at www.state.gov/api) but presented it in a mobile-friendly way. It offers information on human trafficking, foreign affairs, country relations, Secretary of State Kerry's travels and speeches, and more. All data is pulled directly from the Department's application programming interface and is



updated in realtime as bureaus adjust or add details to a given set of their data. DiplomApp also embodies the ideals of transparent government, since the Department is publicly providing its data for use by app developers to create such innovations. More information is at www.fugueweb.com/diplomapp

Fugue, like DiplomApp, is available free for Android and iOS devices. Unlike DiplomApp, this is a literary novel that also includes a six-track musical concept album. This is more than an e-Book with the occasional song. For instance, the characters in the story are embodied by three vocalists in the music, and the word "fugue" is (among other things) a style of musical composition used as a plot metaphor and structural form of the chapters. As the author, composer and developer of Fugue, I produced this app because it seemed the only way to forge a holistic cohesion between

the written word and musical note. I faced several practical constraints, too, such as how to simultaneously facilitate the audience in both the reading and listening process. Fugue only requires an Internet connection to pull the tracks from SoundCloud and leaves the rest for the reader/listener to figure out how to experience it. More information is at www.fugueweb.com/app

Getting started in app development can be intimidating, but at its foundation I find computer code to be just another language. And, unlike a foreign language, it is far more logical, predictable and unambiguous. I've studied several European languages as well as musical composition, and even written a master's thesis on the differences and similarities between music and language. I found this correlation in the learning process to be a strong motivator as I looked to expand my linguistic abilities in new directions.

For those wishing to code apps, there's a wealth of resources and documentation to get started. The open-source community—coders who make their code available for others to improve upon or use for free—consists of legions of computer nerds, and its output includes YouTube clips, online courses and detailed FAQs, plus the willingness of those coders and developers to "geekout" with anyone who poses them an interesting online question.

And the tools are largely all available for free. For example, all the apps I've created utilize license-free programming frameworks (such as Cordova, AngularJS, Ionic and jQuery) to achieve their touch-sensitive feel and their "cross-platform functionality," meaning their ability to run the same code on different operating systems. Once you finish your app, the distribution process of having your app available on Google Play or the Apple App Store available

to billions of people requires you to have played by their rules and also to find a way to distinguish your app from the competition.

Today, 20 years since the Internet revolution began, an entire generation has been raised inside this digital incubator. Having straddled both sides of the cultural shift (I was born in 1981 and started coding at age 30), I encourage people of all ages to embrace this technological change and the codes that underpin it. Things are not reverting backward anytime soon; you only have to ride public transit to realize that. But if you are inspired as I was to learn a new type of language, if you want to utilize the most powerful distribution model in the history of mankind to share your ideas, then learn some code and give the world something to look at.

in brief... \\\\\\\ State Magazine 🗖 NOVEMBER 2015 \ 16



Ethics Answers

Q: My ambassador asked me to help screen her from conflicts of interest. She has stock investments in a few U.S. companies, and I keep an eye on those interests and the ambassador's schedule to make sure she doesn't inadvertently work on anything involving or affecting any of those companies. My ambassador is also a big fan of our post's social media efforts and has an official Facebook account and Twitter feed. Should I also keep an eye on what she says on these social media sites?

A: Yes. Anything she says on her official social media sites is official action. Therefore, your ambassador should not post anything on these sites that involves or affects any of these companies. You should make sure the ambassador knows this, and you should also keep an eye on her sites. She should also understand that—given the very limited personal capacity the ambassador has at post—any statements she makes on personal sites could also be regarded as official action.

Ethics Answers presents hypothetical ethical scenarios Department employees might face. For help with real ethics questions, email ethicsattorneymailbox@state.gov.



Mission Holds Health Care Event

Foreign Service medical provider Mary Jo Person opens the presentations at U.S. Mission Guatemala's event on Health Care Diplomacy. The September event, hosted by the Health Unit, featured presentations by health teams from USAID, CDC and Peace Corps on their initiatives in Guatemala—from HIV prevention, maternal-child health, child nutrition, disease investigation and control, and other topics. Nearly 70 local health care providers attended.



Retirements

CIVIL SERVICE

Browne Jr., Thomas M.

Cano, Dora C.

Daugherty, Randall Mark

Egan, Gerald F.

Febo, Frederick F.

Fogarty, Patrick T.

Gehron, Michael McDermott

Jones, Shalita A.

Keane, Beverly J.

Liptak, Agnes K.

Lockwood, Susan E.

Markey, John D.

Morin, Marilyn Jean

Naylor, Lori L.

Nilsen, Arthur W.

Pittman, Leb E.

Rapp, Stephen J.

Sismanidis, Roxane D.V.

Thurwachter, Midori N.

Trimakas, Edmund D.

Trimble, Gretchen E.

Zawada, Roman M.

FOREIGN SERVICE

Acuff, Ronald D.

Armstrong, Teresa N.

Birkinshaw, Laura

Chianis, Dianna

Hagerstrom, Kristin M.

Hinton, Terrance M.

Hunter, Leslie C.

Hurlbert, Robert E.

Leasburg, Therese B.

Le Clair Jr., Russell G.

McCrensky, Richard M.

Meininger, Vernon Ray

Oliver, Mary K.

Osage, Christine M.

Pellegrino, Daniel J.

Redd, Niceta L.

Schwan, Aric R.

Strano, Andrea V.

Tibbs, Lucinda I

Williamson, James Gregory

Wood, William Braucher

Whitney, Colwell C.



Songs for Ramadan in Casablanca

Popular Moroccan Jewish singer Vanessa Paloma leads a song with Moroccan Muslim singers at "Ramadan Musical Soiree," a 16-year tradition, at the U.S. Consulate General in Casablanca historic residence, Villa Mirador. The performance was part of the July 2 event in which the consulate general and Dar America, the embassy's library and cultural center, celebrated Ramadan with Islamic, Jewish and Christian religious songs sung by prominent Moroccan artists. Ambassador Dwight L. Bush, Sr. and Consul General Nicole Theriot joined Moroccan guests, including media representatives and high-level contacts, in singing along with popular tunes to highlight interreligious tolerance and unity in Morocco.

Photo by Nasreddine Lazghem



Mission Niger Screens Film

Women enter the American Cultural Center in Niamey, Niger, Aug. 14 for the screening of a documentary about Niger women's rights activist Mama Kiota, an event attended by Ambassador Eunice Reddick. The wife of a famous sheikh, Mama Kiota has worked to obtain Koranic education for women, helping them gain the education in the Koran that opens socioeconomic opportunities.

Photo by John "Sonny" Padula



Embassy Has Three Andrew Duffs

At the embassy's Fourth of July celebration were the three Andrew Duffs then at the U.S. Embassy Brasilia. They were, from left, Andrew J. Duff III, his father Andrew J. Duff and Andrew W. Duff (not related). Andrew J. arrived two years ago as Department of Homeland Security attaché, then Andrew W. was stationed here after serving in Shanghai. Andrew J. Duff's son, a student at Wake Forest University, joined the embassy as a summer hire with the USDA's office.

Photo by Brenda Duff



Detailee Wins Government Service Award

Jacob E. Moss, a senior Environmental Protection Agency adviser on a detail assignment to the Department of State, has received a Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal—among nine government-wide SAMMIES winners this year—from the nonprofit Partnership for Public Service. He was honored for building an alliance of federal and international agencies, countries and corporations to bring more efficient cook stoves and cleaner burning fuels to homes in developing nations. Kris Balderston, former special representative for Global Partnerships, said Moss had "reached out to all the nongovernment organizations working on this issue and built a circle of trust."

Photo by Aaron Clamage



SPECIAL ENVOY FOR SPECIAL FEELINGS WINK SPINGLE CALLS FOR A FIFTY PERCENT INCREASE IN GOOD VIBRATIONS ON WORLD MELLOWNESS DAY.



REGIONAL GROOVINESS OFFICER MANDY BITTEN-MOOSE CONDUCTS ANTI-SNARK TRAINING AT EMBASSY GUANOVIA





ALLER 2015



EVEN THE HENCHMEN OF ROQUE REGIMES APPRECIATE A THOUGHTFUL FRUIT BOUQUET.





Medical Report

On a recent sunny noontime walk, a group heads across Memorial Bridge to Arlington Cemetery, accompanied by Health and Wellness Educator Gary Bolden (not pictured). *Photo by Michael Hahn*

Walk Your Way to Better Health

By Rachel Boehm, wellness communications specialist, Office of Medical Services MED/DASHO

The should all walk more, the U.S. surgeon general said in his recent Call to Action report, "Step It Up!" It seeks to reduce the number of chronic diseases caused in part by sedentary lifestyles.

One out of every two American adults is living with a chronic disease such as cancer, diabetes or heart disease. These increase health care costs and increase the risks for disability and premature death, the surgeon general warned.

The Office of Medical Services' Wellness Program recognizes that incorporating physical activity throughout the day, not just a short pre- or postwork workout, can reduce a person's risk for developing these ailments. Leading an active lifestyle can also support healthy aging and positive mental health. However, it's not always easy to increase our activity level. Beyond harried schedules, Department employees might work and live in places that are not conducive to outdoor physical activity. They also may believe they do not have access to the necessary equipment for increased indoor activity.

That's where walking comes in. Of all the ways to increase one's level of physical activity, walking is the most accessible, requiring no special facility or equipment. It can be done anywhere, by anyone.

Among the surgeon general's findings, several stand out:

- People who are physically active have a 30 percent lower risk of early death.
- Adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week.
- Among adults who are engaged in any physical activity, 52 percent of men and 74 percent of women reported walking as one of the top two activities in which they participated.
- Sixty percent of people who walked met the 150-minutes-per-week guideline by walking alone or in combination with other forms of physical activity.

Here are some tips from staff of the Wellness Program to help you join the surgeon general's initiative, no matter your post environment or physical capacity.

One of the best ways to change behavior is to involve others. So, consider starting or joining a walking group at your post/annex or incorporating walking meetings. You could also start or join a neighborhood walking group. Or take your family on a morning or evening stroll.

You can also do more walking on your own by taking the stairs instead of escalators or elevators when possible. Before and after work, park your car farther away or use a subway/metro station that's one stop beyond your normal one.

The key is to find little bits of time throughout the day that you can put to use. These minutes here and there will add up to big results.

Those working in a relatively standard post environment should get outdoors for a brisk stroll, but if they're at a walking-unfriendly post (e.g., adverse cultural norms, safety concerns, air quality and temperature issues), they might need to take their steps indoors. This is especially true for those with asthma, heart or lung conditions, or a lower respiratory disease, as exposure to air pollution can increase potential health problems.

Any indoor location provides an opportunity to walk; the key is to find ways to mix up the resistance, intensity and incline. Creative walking locales include a mall, grocery store, office building, school, indoor track or flea market.

Even if you're confined to a single space, such as a hotel room or office, you can walk in place or simply raise your knees higher than you normally would for a certain length of time. If you are able to move about a building, you can use the stairwells or escalators for variety. Walking from floor to floor will also give you more ground to cover.

To vary the intensity, speed up and slow down your pace. To increase resistance, wear ankle weights or a weight belt, or carry hand weights. These can also be incorporated into your outdoor walking routines.

Chronic conditions, such as arthritis, asthma and heart disease may limit one's ability to exercise. Some people may be frailer due to age and therefore reluctant to walk at a brisk pace. If that's your situation, consult your doctor before picking up an exercise routine.

However, more often than not, you have more to lose by remaining sedentary. Walking your way to better health is a step-by-step process. For some, the key is simply slowing the pace, sticking to flat surfaces and shortening the distance at the start.

As the surgeon general said, "Walking for better health may seem simplistic, but sometimes the most important things we can do are also the easiest and the most obvious.... The journey to better health begins with a single step."



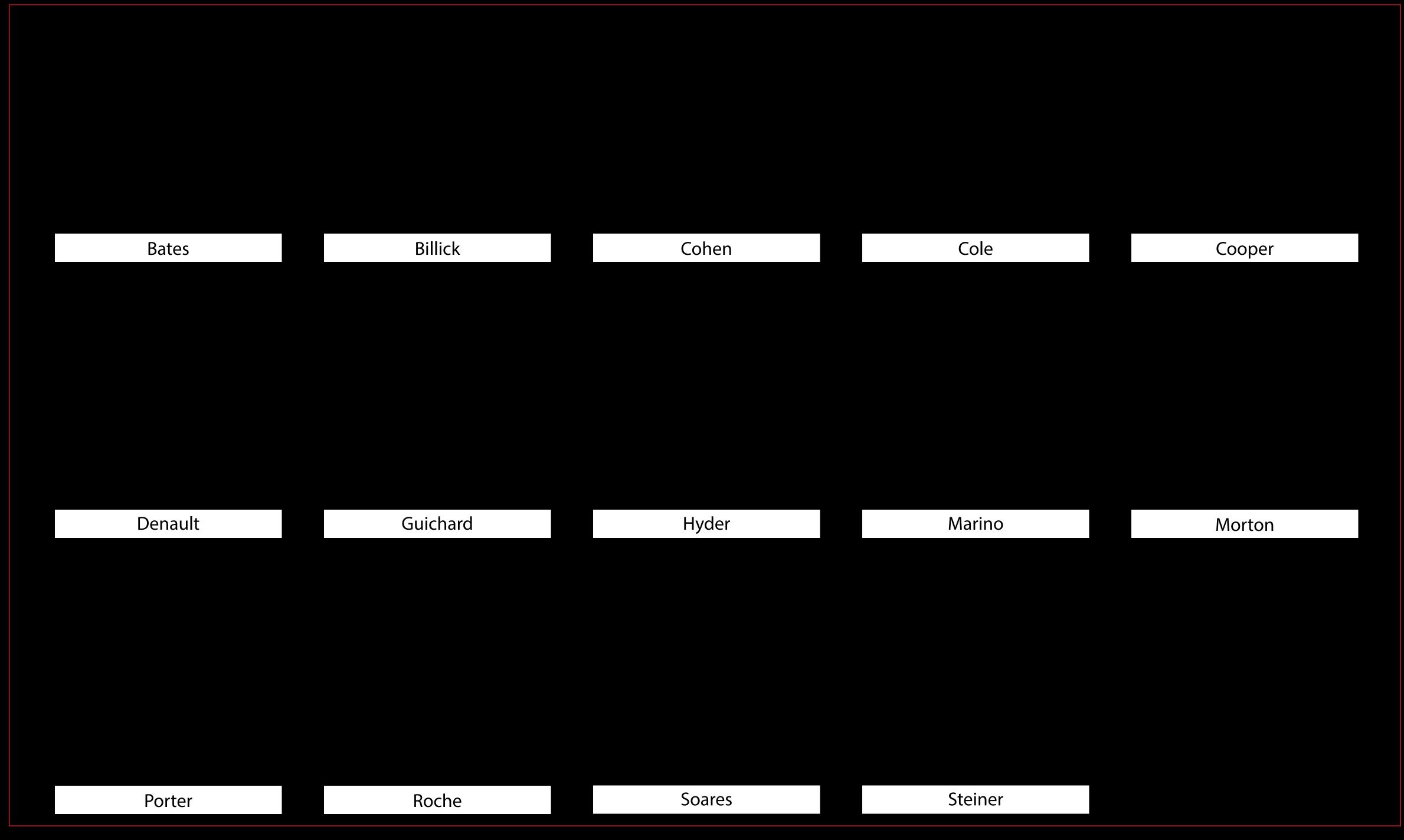
Learn more about the surgeon general's Call to Action



Start your own walking group contact MED Wellness

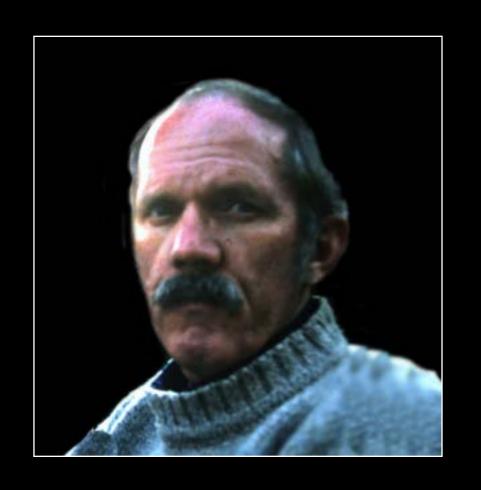


See State employees' testimonials



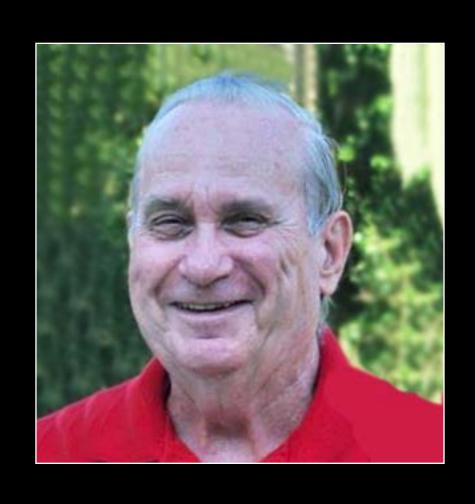
Questions concerning employee deaths should be directed to the Office of Casualty Assistance at (202) 736-4302. Inquiries concerning deaths of retired employees should be directed to the Office of Retirement at (202) 261-8960. For specific questions on submitting an obituary, please contact Michael Hahn at hahnmg@state.gov or (202) 663-2230.

Larry Earl Bates



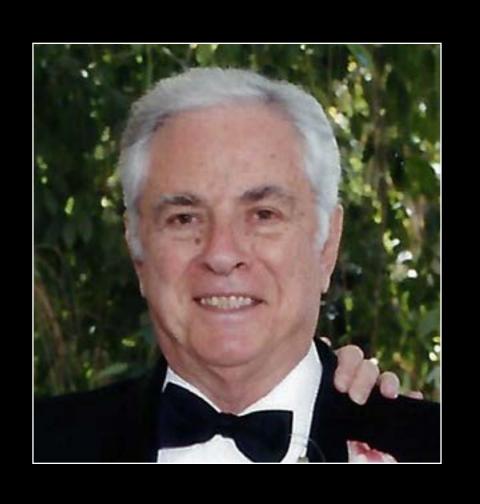
Larry Earl Bates, 90, a retired Foreign Service communications officer, died Aug. 1 at the Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' home in St. Augustine, Fla. He was in the Air Force during World War II and served in the Pacific and in Korea as a radio operator. He joined the Department in 1967, and his overseas posts included Paris, Luanda, Hong Kong, Panama City, Moscow, Brussels, Bern, the Sinai Field Mission and Cairo. He retired in 1982.

Michael "Mike" Billick



Michael "Mike" Billick, 85, a retired FSO, died June 17 in Florida. He served in the Air Force before joining the Department in 1954. His first assignment was Seoul, Korea, and then he and his family were posted to Canada, Malawi, Kuwait, Turkey, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Dominican Republic and South Africa. He retired to Edgewater, Fla., in 1984, but continued working for State on TDYs in more than a dozen countries, mostly throughout the Western Hemisphere. A devout Catholic, avid reader and golfer, he enjoyed traveling, poker, bowling, politics and being a financial mentor to his family.

Harold Cohen



Harold Cohen, 94, a retired FSO, died July 18 in Sacramento, Calif. He served in the Army Air Corps in England during World War II and soon afterward joined USIA. His postings included Ankara, Tehran, Saigon, Islamabad, Vienna, Kinshasa and New Delhi before retiring in 1980. He remained active, joining the Renaissance Club at California State University in Sacramento, continuing to travel and spending time with his family. He loved singing and was fond of the opportunity to have sung with the Glenn Miller Orchestra in England when he was stationed there.

Juanita Cole



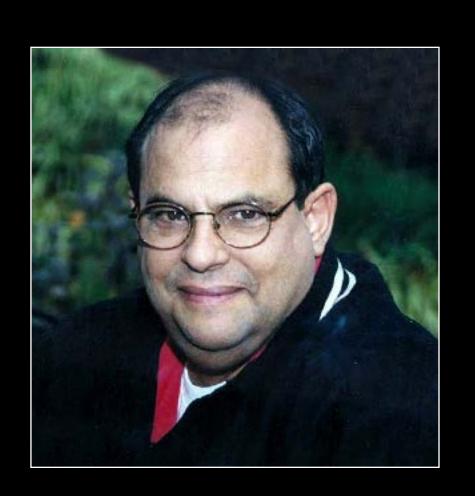
Juanita Cole, 81, a retired FS specialist, died peacefully at home July 15 in Denver, Colo. Joining the Department in 1961, she was one of the first African-American women to enter the Foreign Service. Her three decades as a communications officer included postings to Bamako, Tunis, Paris, London, Geneva, Bangkok, New Delhi and Chennai. The joy in her life came from cooking and entertaining. She retired in an international community called Auroville in southern India. In 2004, due to memory loss, she was forced to move back to Denver.

Therese J. Cooper



Therese J. Cooper, 91, the widow of FSO John M. Cooper, died Sept. 14 at her home in Washington, D.C. She accompanied her husband to posts in Paris, The Hague, Rome, Brussels, London, Barranquilla, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Kingston and Seoul. Throughout her life she followed her passion for teaching and always remembered her students. She taught French, Spanish and international cuisine at the international schools in Bangkok and Hong Kong, and also at the School Without Walls in Washington. A Kappa Delta Pi member, she remained involved with education in retirement and enjoyed arts and antiques with her husband.

Herbert "Chip" M. Denault Jr.



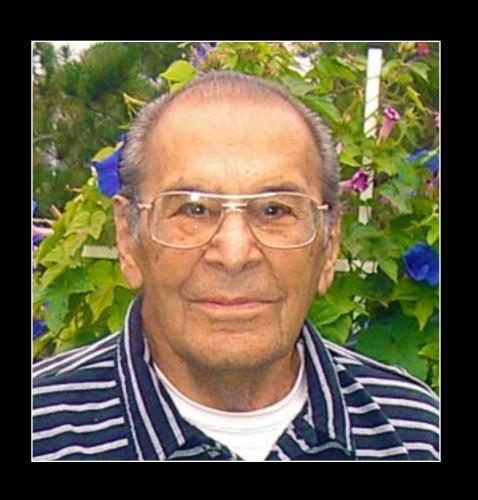
Herbert "Chip" M. Denault Jr., 68, a retired Civil Service employee, died at his home in Lincoln, Del. He enjoyed a lengthy career as a telecommunications specialist, joining the Department in 1977 and retiring after more than 25 years of service. His passion for art and photography led to his opening an art gallery in Bethesda, Md. He was known for being very creative, a great entertainer and an exceptional host who loved to cook delicious meals for his friends.

Miriam Guichard



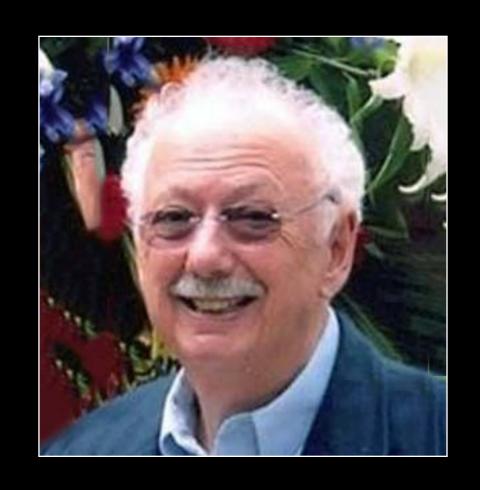
Miriam Guichard, 76, a retired FSO, died Aug. 6 in Atlanta, Ga. While a Fulbright scholar in France in the 1960s, she met her late husband Yves from Guinea. They later moved to Conakry where they raised two sons. She joined USIA in 1983 and served in Abidjan, Brazzaville, Lusaka, Madras, Dar es Salaam and Paris, where she worked for the Africa Regional Services. Retiring in 2003, she embarked on a career as a mentor and sage to people from all around the world.

Maurice Joseph Hyder



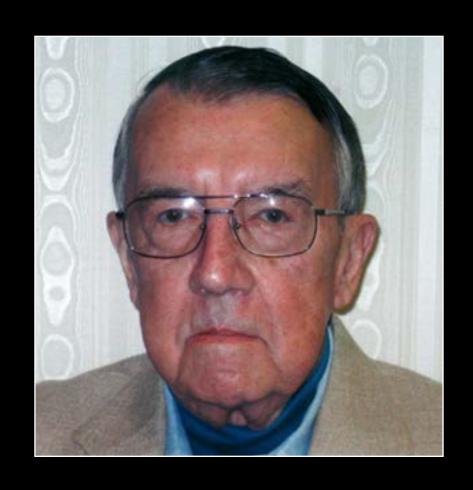
Maurice Joseph Hyder, 93, a retired FSO, died Aug. 20 in Chico, Calif. He served in the Navy during World War II. During his tenure with USAID, he was posted to the Middle East, Nigeria, Brazil, the Philippines and Vietnam, where he helped coordinate the evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon and Operation Babylift in 1975. Soon after, he retired to Mi Wuk Village in California. There, he was actively involved with the Boy Scouts both at the local and national levels. His final achievement was the completion of a book, "My Wonderful Amazing Beautiful Life."

James Marino, Jr.



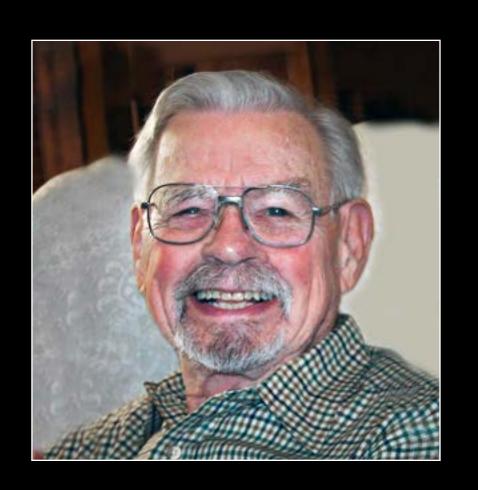
James Marino, Jr., 77, a retired Civil Service employee, died Aug. 22 from PSP/MSA in Fairfax, Va. He briefly served in the Air Force (Okinawa) before embarking on a 40-year career at State, including postings in Manila and Frankfurt. After retirement in 2001, he studied language and fine arts, completed a degree in history and actively volunteered for Fairfax County. He was a voracious reader, enjoyed the outdoors, played softball, and had an innate talent of amusing and caring for those around him, including his wife of 49 years, Margot, and their two beloved furry companions, Seymour and Ms. Kitty.

Byron Benson Morton



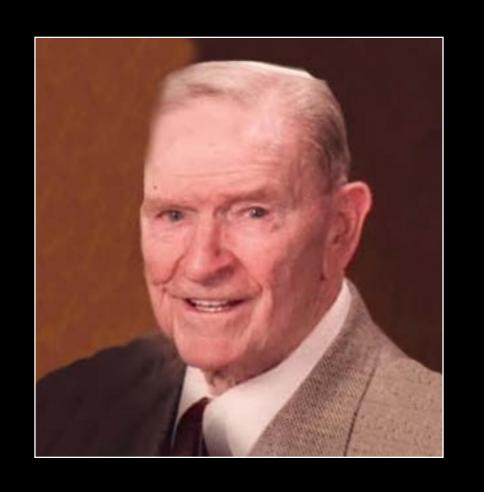
Byron Benson Morton, 84, a retired FSO, died from Parkinson's disease Aug. 12 in the Skilled Nursing Center of Maplewood Senior Residence in Bethesda, Md. After serving in the Army, he joined the Department in 1956 and was posted to Moscow, Kobe, Belgrade, Tehran, Prague (as DCM), Bonn and Ramstein, Germany, where he was the political adviser to the Commanding General of the U.S. Air Force in Europe. He was a Russia hand and expert on the Soviet military. He retired in 1990 and lived in Bethesda.

George W. Porter



George W. Porter, 96, a retired FSO, died Aug. 22 from complications following a fall at Collington Life Care Community in Mitchellville, Md. He served in the Army during World War II and worked as a newspaper reporter and as an editor for the New Orleans Times-Picayune before joining USIA in 1960. He served in the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore. He retired in 1979. Throughout his career he kept a darkroom and studio. Several of his photos documenting life on the island city-state of Singapore as it declared independence from Malaysia were published in a book, "Singapore 60s."

William James Roche



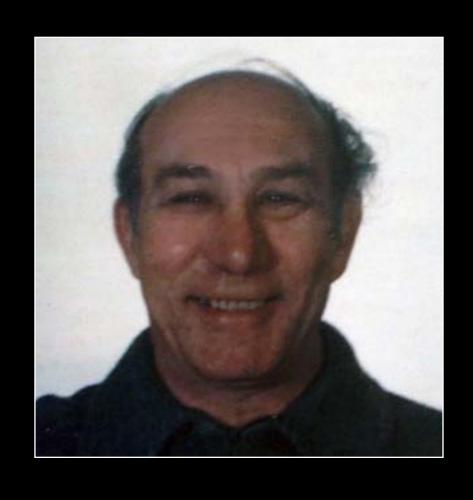
William James Roche, 88, a retired FSO, died Sept. 11 in Escondido, Calif., after a brief illness. He served in the Navy at the end of World War II and joined the Department in 1964. His overseas postings included Paris, Ankara, Bangkok, Rome and Mexico City. He retired in 1977 and continued to work for State as a consultant, which took him to Rio de Janeiro, Nairobi, Helsinki, Prague, Buenos Aires and Geneva. He loved to travel and gave his family a wonderfully rich life.

Michael F. "Mike" Soares



Michael F. "Mike" Soares, 69, a retired FSO, died suddenly July 13 of a heart attack near his home in Abbekerk, Netherlands. His 35-year career included posts in Tripoli, Gaborone, Tokyo, Algiers, Beirut, Kuala Lumpur, Kingston, Santo Domingo and The Hague. After retiring from the service in 1998, he worked for 10 more years in Schiphol Airport during which time he became fluent in Dutch. In his spare time, he read and traveled extensively, was an avid gardener and kept in touch with friends around the globe.

Max Steiner



Max Steiner, 93, a retired Civil Service employee, died Aug. 15 in Alexandria, Va. He served in the Army during World War II and took part in the Normandy invasion. His 39-year career spanned State and USIA. He was among the pioneer staff of the Voice of America when it commenced operations in New York City. He retired as senior budget analyst in the comptroller's office at the U.S. Information and Communications Agency in 1981. He remained keenly interested in politics and world events. He and Loretta, his wife of 69 years, enjoyed traveling and visiting family and friends.

